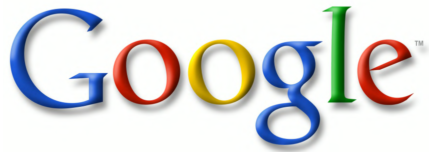

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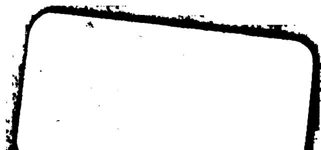

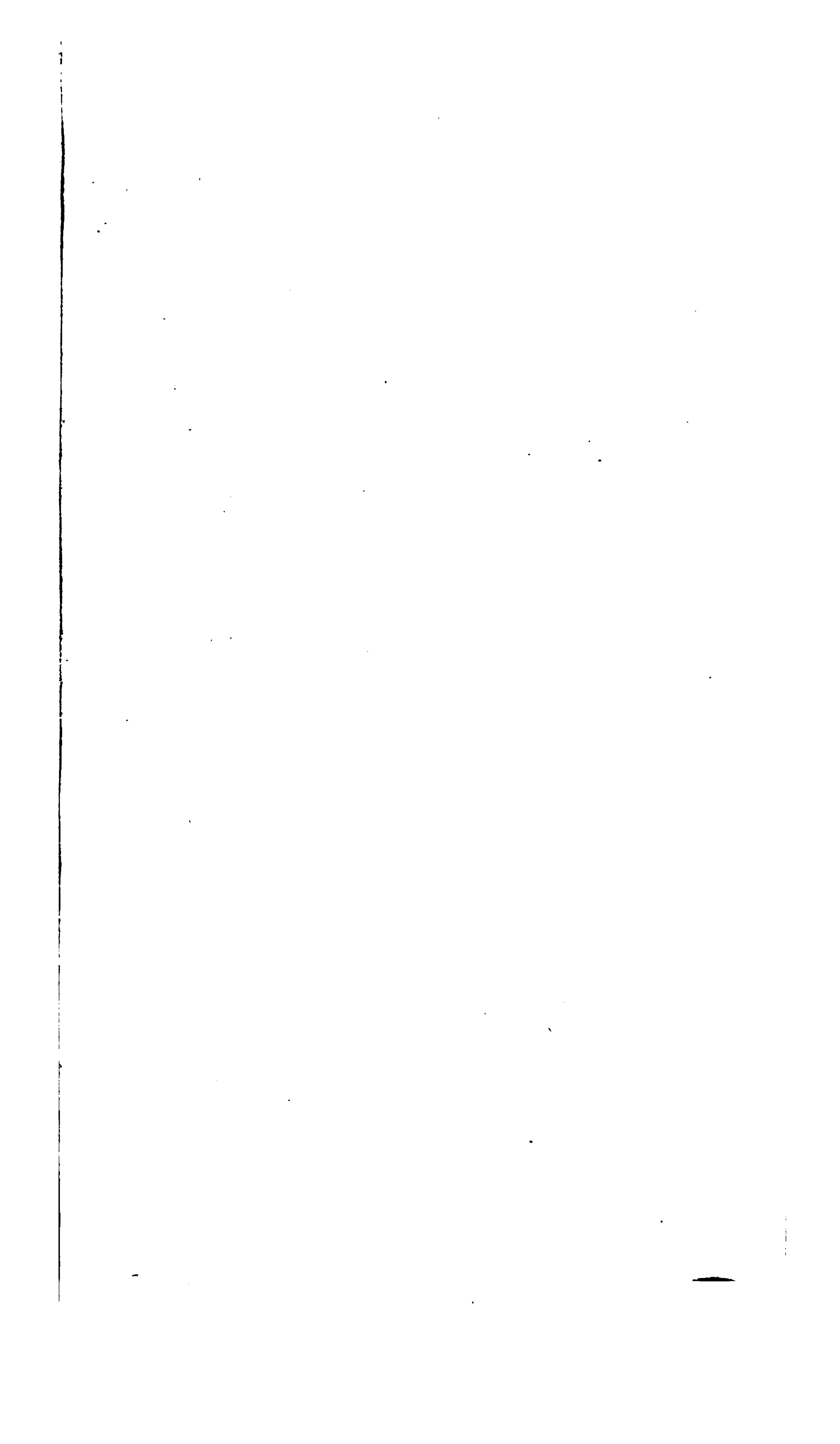

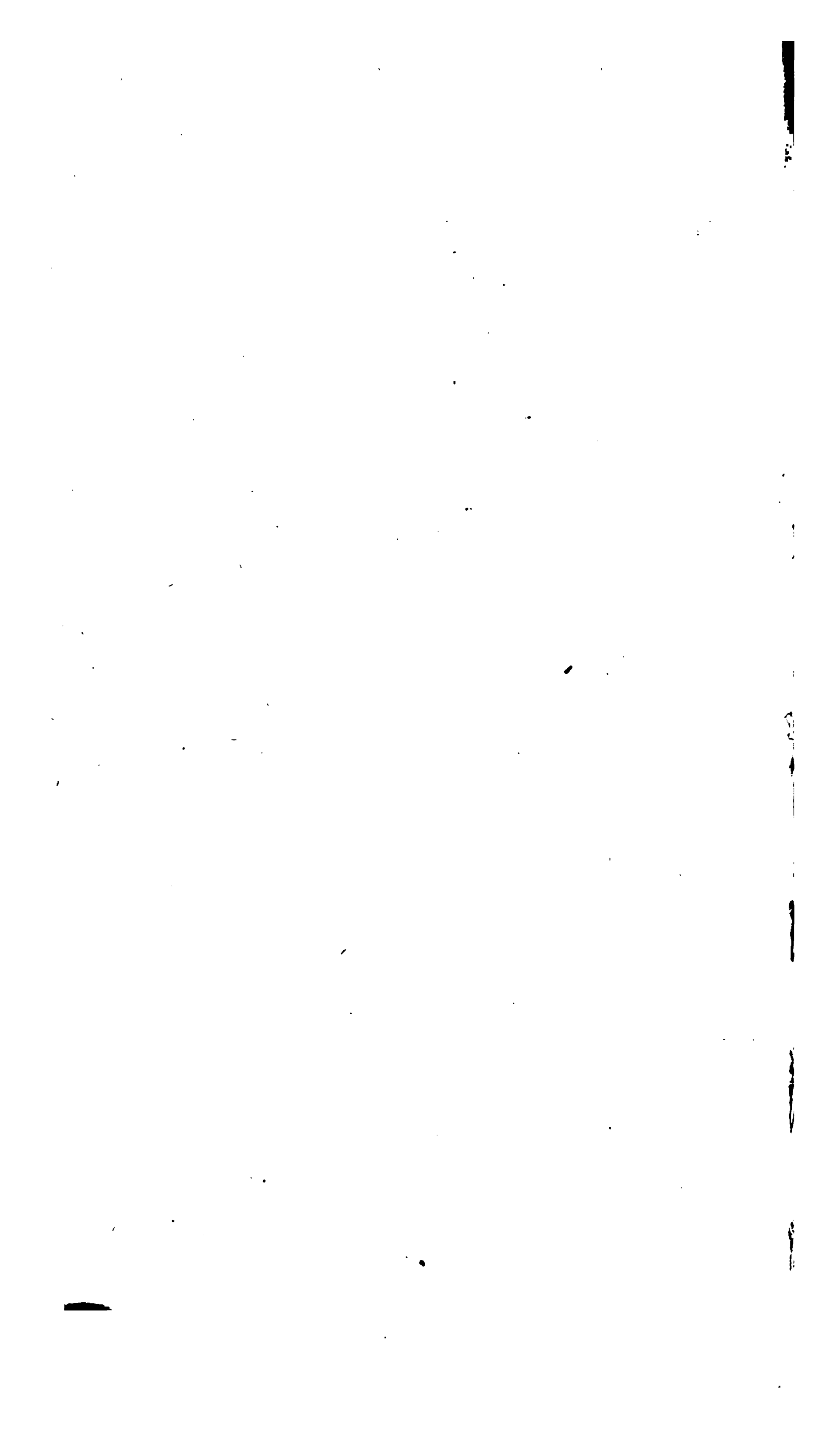

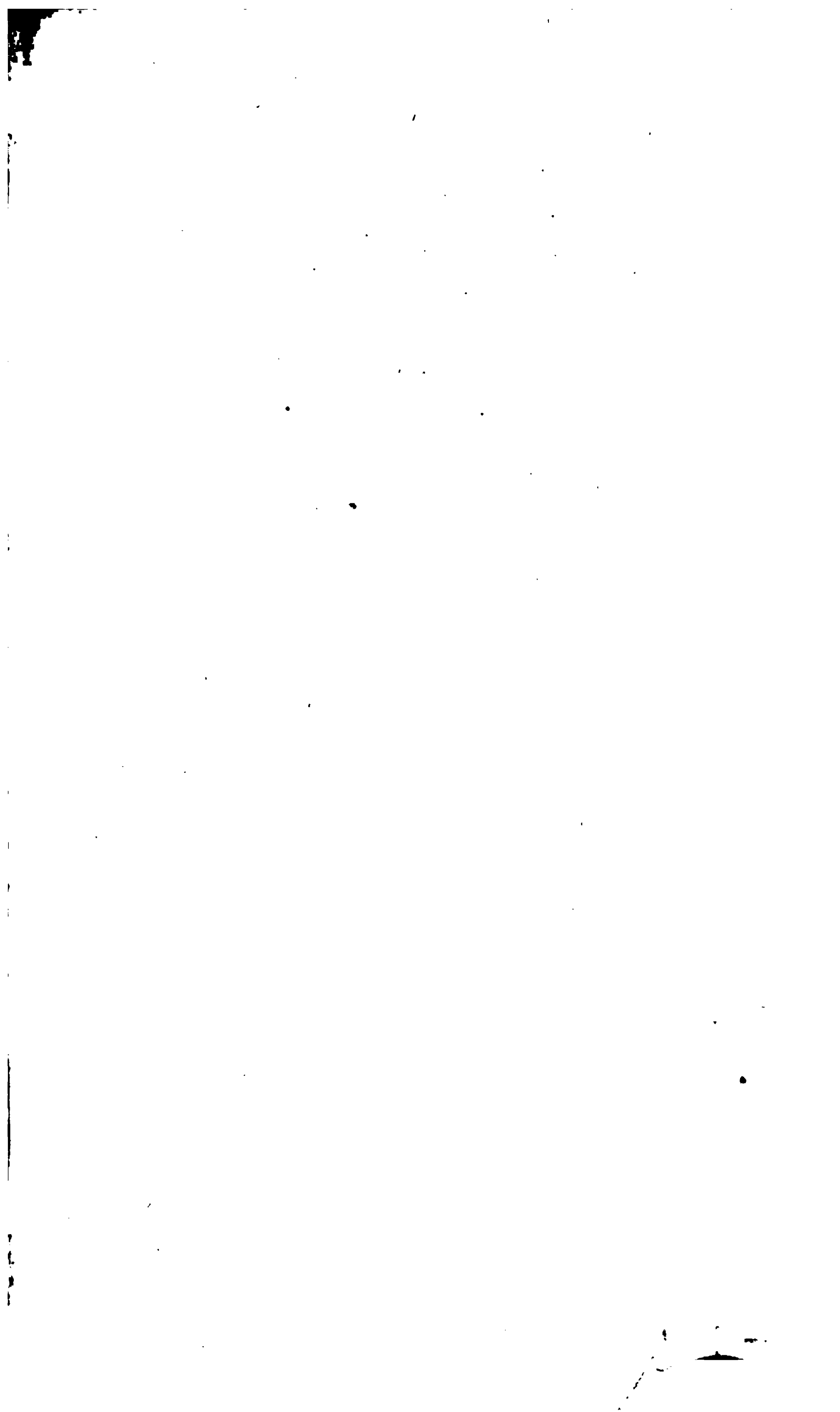

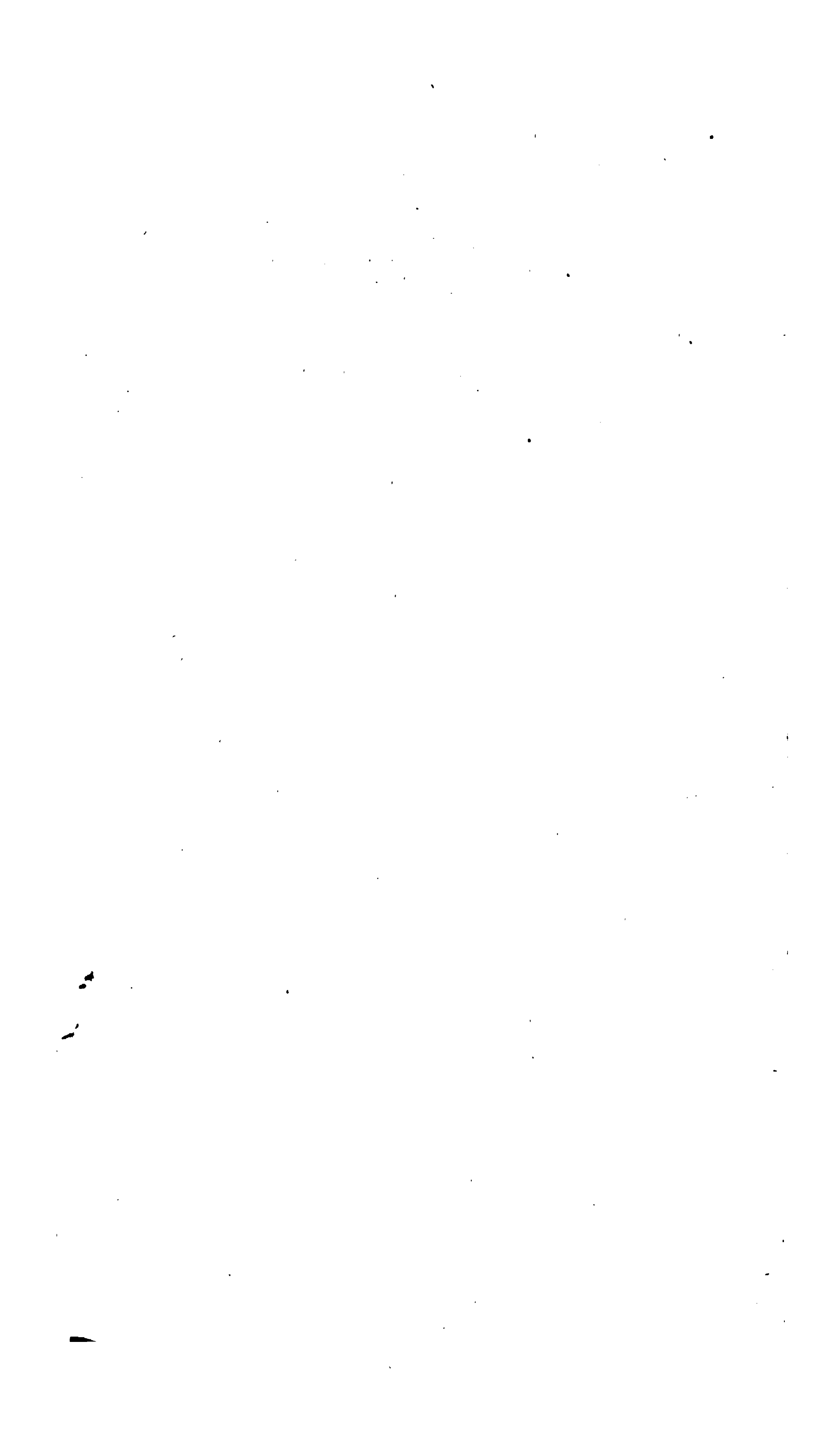

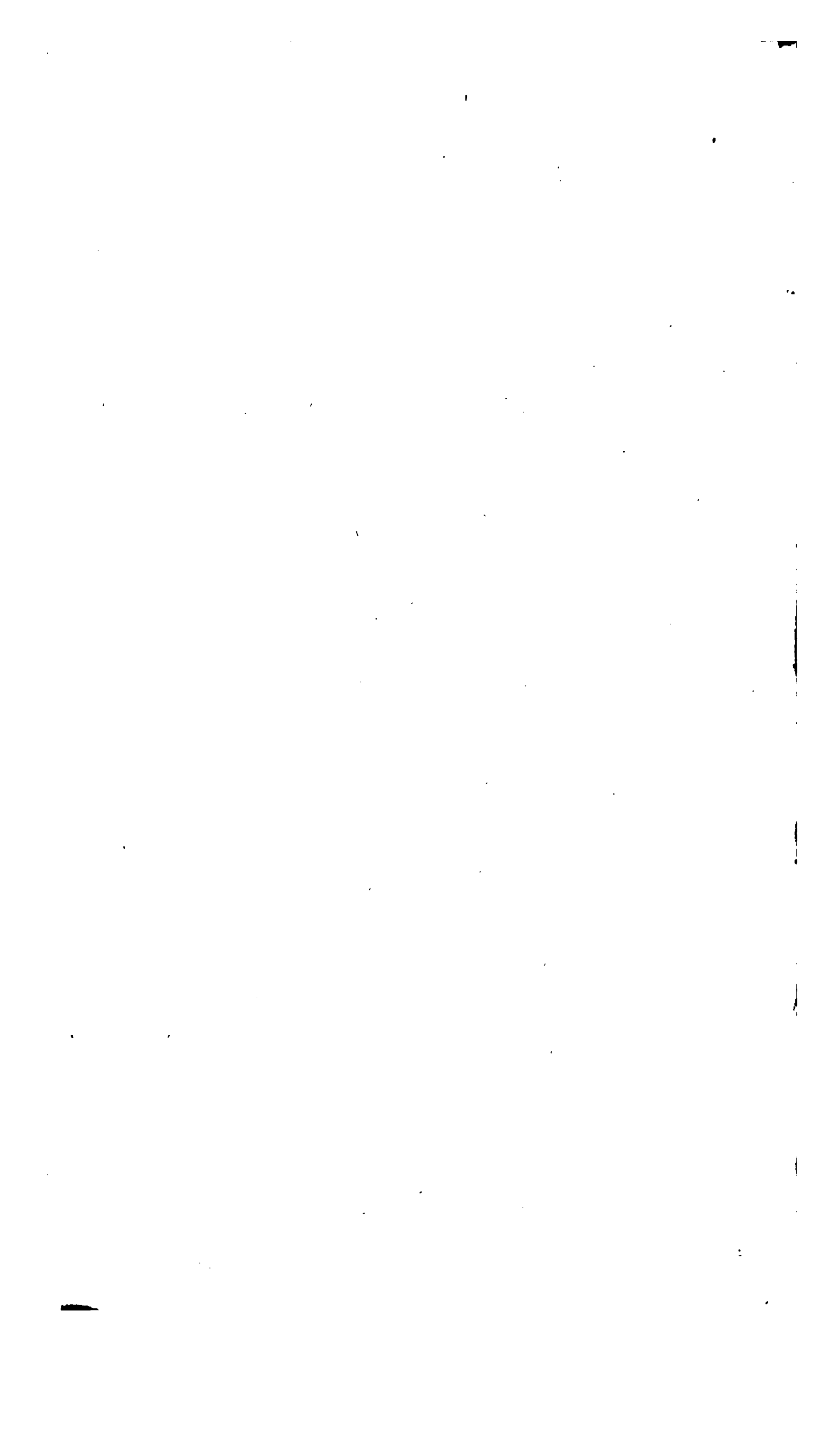

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN.

FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN

WHO FLOURISHED IN

THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

REMARKS ON PARTY, AND AN APPENDIX.

BY

HENRY LORD BROUGHAM, F.R.S.,

AND MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

A New Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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This Work is Inscribed

TO

MARY ANNE, BARONESS BROUGHAM,

AS

A TOKEN

OF

THE AFFECTION, RESPECT, AND ESTEEM,

OF

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

PAGE

Introduction 9
George III. 13
Lord Chatham 23
Lord North 47
Lord Loughborough 65
Lord Thurlow 79
Lord Mansfield 89
Lord Chief Justice Gibbs 109
Sir William Grant 119
Mr. Burke 125
Mr. Fox 153
Mr. Pitt 167
Mr. Sheridan 179
Mr. Windham 187
Mr. Dundas 193
Mr. Erskine 201
Mr. Perceval 209
Lord Grenville 217
Mr. Grattan 223
Mr. Wilberforce 231
Mr. Canning 239
Sir Samuel Romilly 249
Effects of Party 255
Franklin 269

PAGE

Frederic II. 275

Gustavus III. 295

The Emperor Joseph . . . 307

The Empress Catherine 319

APPENDIX.

I. Note on this Work . . . 333

II. Communication respecting Lord Chatham . 333

III. Letter from Lady Charlotte Lindsay on Lord North 334

IV. Statement of the case between Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots . . 341

STATESMEN

OF THE

TIMES OF GEORGE III.

INTRODUCTION.

The affairs of men, the interests and the history of nations, the relative value of institutions as discovered by their actual working, the merits of different systems of policy as tried by their effects, are all very imperfectly examined without a thorough knowledge of the individuals who administered the systems and presided over the management of the public concerns. The history of empires is, indeed, the history of men, not only of the nominal rulers of the people, but of the leading persons who exerted a sensible influence over the destinies of their fellow-creatures, whether the traces of that influence survived themselves, or, as in the case of lesser minds, their power was confined to their own times.

But, in another view, this kind of inquiry, this species of record is even more important. Not only the world at large is thus instructed, but the character of statesmen and rulers is improved. Examples are held up of the faults which they are to avoid, and of the virtues which they are to cultivate. Nor can history ever be the school of potentates, whether on or near the throne, unless the character and the conduct of their predecessors be thoroughly scrutinized. This task has been attempted in the following work, which aspires, therefore, to a

higher office than merely amusing the vacant hours of the idle (the hours a little more unemployed than the bulk of their time), and aims at recording, for the warning or for the encouragement of the great, the errors of the wisdom, the vices or the virtues, of their predecessors. It is a well-meant contribution, of which the merit is very humbly rated by its author, to the fund of Useful Knowledge as applied to the Education of those upon whose information or ignorance the fortunes of mankind in an especial manner depend. But, how moderate soever may be the merits of the contributor, the value of the contribution cannot easily be estimated too highly, if by only stating the facts with careful accuracy, and drawing the inferences with undeviating candour, those who voluntarily assume the government of nations are taught to regard their duties as paramount to their interests, and made to learn that ignorance of their craft is in their calling criminal, by having placed before their eyes the examples of others—their signal punishment to deter from vice, their glorious reward to stimulate in well-doing. This salutary lesson will be taught if the friends of mankind, the votaries of duty, of peace, of freedom, be held up to veneration, while their enemies, themselves the slaves of ambition or avarice, and who would forge fetters for their fellow-creatures or squander their substance or their blood, are exhibited to the scorn and hatred of after-ages.

The chief objection to such a work, undertaken so soon after the persons whom it undertakes to portray have left this earthly scene, arises from the difficulty of preserving strict impartiality in considering their merits. This difficulty is not denied; its formidable magnitude is not underrated. Even if no human feelings with respect to men, between whom and ourselves there may have existed relations of amity or of hostility, swayed the mind, yet are we ever prone to view through a distorting medium those whose principles agreed with or differed from our own upon questions still of daily occurrence—of men, too, whose party connexions united them with classes still in existence and actively engaged in the proceedings of the present day.

But, while this is admitted to render the attempt difficult, it may not be found to make it hopeless. At any rate we are placed in a choice of evils. A postponement till the day when there should be no possibility of passion or prejudice shading the path of the historian may extinguish the recollections, also, which alone can give value to his narrative. The transfer of the work to mere strangers, who can be animated by no feeling of a personal kind, leaves it in hands, if not altogether incapable of performing it satisfactorily, at least incomparably inferior in the power of giving vivid likenesses of contemporary statesmen. At the very least, these portraitures may be regarded as materials for history, if not worthy of being called historical themselves; and future penmen may work upon them with the benefit of contemporary testimony as to facts, though free from the bias which may have influenced the conclusions. The author can only affirm, and this he does most conscientiously, that he has ever felt under a sacred obligation to pursue the truth of his resemblances without either exaggeration or concealment; that he has written, or endeavoured to write, as if he had lived in a remote age or country from those whose rulers he has endeavoured to describe; and that, if any prejudices or predilections have operated upon his mind, they have been unknown to himself. He is quite aware that some may consider this a very equivocal test of his impartiality, if they do not rather see in it an additional symptom of blind prepossession. But he thinks the praise betowed upon known political adversaries, and the disapproval, admitted to be just, of conduct frequently held by the party for whose services to the cause of freedom he is most grateful, will be taken as some evidence of general impartiality, though it may not suffice to exempt him from the charge of having sometimes unwarily fallen into the snares that beset the path of whoever would write contemporary annals.

GEORGE III.

The centre figure around which the others that compose this picture group themselves, and with which they almost all have relations, is that of George III., a prince whose long reign during by far the most important period in the history of the human race, rendered his character and conduct a matter of the deepest interest not only to the people of his vast dominions, but to all mankind. He presided over the destinies of the British Empire, the only free state in the world, during an age that witnessed the establishment of independence in the new hemisphere, and the extension of liberty over a great portion of the old. He ruled the most enlightened nation of modern times, while civilization, rapidly spreading in all directions, dispelled the remains of feudal darkness in Europe, carried its light over other quarters of the globe, and discovered and cultivated unknown regions. Wherefore, his capacity, whether to appreciate his position, or to aid in the progress of his people and his species, if he should have the wisdom to choose the right path, or to obstruct it, should he erroneously deem resistance the better course, was a matter of the greatest importance both to himself personally, to the order in which his lot was cast, and to the rest of mankind. Unhappily he took the wrong direction; and, having once taken, persevered in it with the pertinacity that marks little minds of all ranks, but which in royal understandings often amounts to a mental disease.

Of a narrow understanding, which no culture had enlarged; of an obstinate disposition, which no education, perhaps, could have humanized; of strong feelings in ordinary things, and a resolute attachment to all his own opinions and predilections, George III. possessed much of the firmness of purpose, which, being exhibited by men of contracted mind without any discrimination, and as pertinaciously when they are in the wrong as when

they are in the right, lends to their characters an appearance of inflexible consistency, which is often mistaken for greatness of mind, and not seldom received as a substitute for honesty. In all that related to his kingly office he was the slave of deep-rooted selfishness; and no feeling of a kindly nature ever was allowed access to his bosom, whenever his power was concerned, either in its maintenance, or in the manner of exercising it. In other respects, he was a man of amiable disposition, and few princes have been more exemplary in their domestic habits, or in the offices of private friendship. But the instant that his prerogative was concerned, or his bigotry interfered with, or his will thwarted, the most unbending pride, the most bitter animosity, the most calculating coldness of heart, the most unforgiving resentment, took possession of his whole breast, and swayed it by turns. The habits of friendship, the ties of blood, the dictates of conscience, the rules of honesty, were alike forgotten; and the fury of the tyrant, with the resources of a cunning which mental alienation is supposed to whet, were ready to circumvent or to destroy all who interposed an obstacle to the fierceness of unbridled desire. His conduct throughout the American war, and towards the Irish people, has often been cited as illustrative of the dark side of his public character; and his treatment of his eldest son, whom he hated with a hatred scarcely consistent with the supposition of a sound mind, might seem to illustrate the shadier part of his personal disposition: but it was in truth only another part of his public, his professional conduct: for he had no better reason for this implacable aversion than the jealousy which men have of their successors, and the consciousness that the Prince, who must succeed him, was unlike him, and being disliked by him, must, during their joint lives, be thrown into the hands of the Whig party, the adversaries he most of all detested and feared.

Although much of the character now portrayed had its origin in natural defect, and part of it in a mind tinged with disease, yet they who had the care of his youth are deeply answerable for the neglect which both

added to it many defects, and prevented those of nature from being eradicated or counteracted. His mother, the Dowager Princess, was a woman of neither knowledge, accomplishments, nor abilities; and she confided his education to her friend, now generally believed to have stood in a more tender relation towards her, Lord Bute. The want of instruction of which George III. could complain must have been great indeed; for if any man was little likely to overrate the value of superfluous or extensive information, it was he. Yet a witness, above all suspicion, Sir Herbert Taylor, has recorded that he lamented, while he admitted, his want of education. Can there be a more shameful thing related? Can any parties, in the station of his Royal parent and her favourite, be guilty of a more disgraceful breach of duty than to leave the future monarch of a free and enlightened people without the instruction which all but the lower classes of his subjects give to their children as a matter of course?

Being not deficient in natural quickness, and the more regularly industrious because of his habitually temperate life, he made himself thoroughly master of all the ordinary details of business; insomuch that the same high authority has ascribed to him a more thorough knowledge of the duties of each several department in the state than any other man ever possessed; and this is the testimony of one both singularly accurate in stating facts, and eminently qualified to form such a comparative estimate by his own intimate acquaintance with official details. We must, however, take care not to overrate the difficulty or the value of this acquirement. Kings have a peculiar interest in ascertaining the bound of each department's duties and rights. They find protection in keeping each within its own limits. Coming, of necessity, into frequent contact with them all, monarchs can easily master the knowledge of their several prerogatives and functions; so that this becomes, like heraldry and etiquette, wherein they are all great proficients, emphatically a Royal branch of knowledge. No proofs remain, nor has even any assertion been made, that he had any familiarity with the nobler

branches of information connected with state affairs; the constitution and privileges of parliament; the jurisdiction of Courts; the principles, nay, even the details of banking, or of trade, generally; the East India or Colonial affairs of his Empire; the interests of foreign countries; the statistics of his own; all of them kinds of knowledge as certainly worthy of princes as they are generally despised by them. That he was a diligent man of business, punctual to his appointments, regular in the distribution of his time, never wanting when his mechanical interposition was required, always ready to continue at work until the affair in hand was despatched, nor ever suffering pleasure or distraction of any kind to interfere with the transaction of the matters belonging to his station, is as undeniable as that all this might be predicated of one who had the most limited capacity, or the most confined information, and who had little else to recommend him than the strict sense of his official duties, and the resolution to make everything yield to the discharge of them, those duties being much more of the hand than the head.

But it would be a great mistake to imagine that George III.'s ambition was confined within the range of his abilities. He was impressed with a lofty feeling of his prerogative, and a firm determination to maintain, perhaps extend it. At all events, he was resolved not to be a mere name, or a cipher in public affairs; and, whether from a sense of the obligations imposed upon him by his station, or from a desire to enjoy all its powers and privileges, he certainly, while his reason remained entire, but especially during the earlier period of his reign, interfered in the affairs of government more than any prince who ever sat upon the throne of this country since our monarchy was distinctly admitted to be a limited one, and its executive functions were distributed among responsible ministers. The correspondence which he carried on with his confidential servants during the ten most critical years of his life lies before us, and it proves that his attention was ever awake to all the occurrences of the government. Not a step was taken in foreign, colonial, or domestic affairs, that he

did not form his opinion upon it, and exercise his influence over it. The instructions to ambassadors, the orders to governors, the movements of forces down to the marching of a single battalion in the districts of this country, the appointments to all offices in church and state, not only the giving away of judgeships, bishoprics, regiments, but the subordinate promotions, lay and clerical; all these form the topics of his letters; on all his opinion is pronounced decisively; on all his will is declared peremptorily. In one letter he decides the appointment of a Scotch puisne judge; in another the march of a troop from Buckinghamshire into Yorkshire; in a third the nomination to the Deanery of Worcester; in a fourth he says that, "if Adam, the architect, succeeds Worsley at the Board of Works, he shall think Chambers ill used."*

For the great affairs of state it is well known how substantially he insisted upon being the King *de facto* as well as *de jure*. The American war, the long exclusion of the liberal party, the French Revolution, the Catholic question, are all sad monuments of his real power. Of all his resolutions on these affairs, the desire to retain America in subjection seems to have been his strongest propensity; during the whole contest all his opinions, all his feelings, and all his designs, turned upon what he termed the "preservation of the empire." Nor was his rooted prejudice against both the Whigs and the French unconnected with the part they both took in behalf of the Colonies. Rather than quit his hold over these provinces and receive the Whigs into his confidence, or do what he called "submitting to be trampled on by his enemies," he at one time threatened to abdicate, and they who knew him are well aware that he did not threaten without a fixed resolution to act. No less than thrice within four days, in March, 1778, did he use this language, in the agony of his mind, at having a juncture with the Whig party proposed by his chief minister; and upon one occasion he says, "If

* This was in 1777, in the middle of the most anxious moment of the American contest; the letter immediately preceding relates to the sum of affairs.

the people will not stand by me, they shall have another king, for I never will set my hand to what will make me miserable to the last hour of my life." The threat is revived upon the division against Lord North four years afterwards.

That such a sovereign was, for the servants he confided in, the best possible master, may well be supposed. He gave them his entire and hearty support. If he kept a watchful eye over all the proceedings both of parliament and the country; if we find him one day commenting on the line taken in debate as "dangerous," at another as "timid and vacillating," or discussing the composition of the majority or its numbers upon the division, or suggesting that the journey of Mr. Fox to Paris should "make the different departments bring on all their business before he comes back, as we shall have much less noise for the next three weeks;" or expressing his conviction that "the Speaker's illness is feigned, and all to let the opposition have their pleasure at Newmarket;" he also asks, "Who deserted you last night that you thought you had a right to count upon? Give me their names, that I may mark my sense of their behaviour at the drawing room to-morrow;" and again, "if the utmost obsequiousness on my part, at the levee to-day, can gain over Mr. Solicitor-General to your views, it shall not be wanting." This was, indeed, efficiently supporting a favourite ministry; and when he had one forced upon him, his whole conduct was the reverse; all his countenance being given to their antagonists, until the moment arrived when he could safely throw them out.

The first impression which such conduct makes is unfavourable to the monarch, and may at first sight even give rise to an opinion that it was unconstitutional. But further reflection makes this somewhat more than doubtful. The question is, "Does the king of this country hold a real or only a nominal office? Is he merely a form, or is he a substantive power in our mixed and balanced constitution?" Some maintain, nay, it is a prevailing opinion among certain authorities of no mean rank, that the sovereign having chosen his ministers, assigns over to

them the whole executive power. They treat him as a kind of trustee for a temporary use, to preserve, as it were, some contingent estate; or a provisional assignee, to hold the property of an insolvent for a day, and then divest himself of the estate by assigning it over. They regard the only power really vested in the crown to be the choice of ministers, and even the exercise of this to be controlled by the parliament. They reduce the king more completely to the condition of a state pageant or state cipher than one of Abbé Sieyes's constitutions did, when he proposed to have a Grand Functionary with no power except to give away offices; upon which Napoleon, then first consul, to whom the proposition was tendered, asked if it well became him to be made a "Cochon à l'engrais à la somme de trois millions par an?"* The English animal, according to the Whig doctrine, much more nearly answers this somewhat coarse description; for the Abbe's plan was to give his royal beast a substantial voice in the distribution of all patronage; while our lion is only to have the sad prerogative of naming whomsoever the parliament chooses, and eating his own mess in quiet.

Now, with all the disposition in the world to desire that Royal prerogative should be restricted, and the will of the nation govern the national affairs, we cannot comprehend this theory of a monarchy. It assigns to the Crown either far too much revenue, or far too little power. To pay a million a-year, or more, for a name, seems absurdly extravagant. To affect living under a kingly government, and yet suffer no kind of kingly power, seems extravagantly absurd. Surely the meaning of having a sovereign is, that his voice should be heard, and his influence felt, in the administration of public affairs. The different orders of the state have a right to look towards that high quarter all in their turn for support when their rights are invaded by one another's encroachments, or to claim the Royal umpirage when their mutual conflicts cannot be settled by mutual concessions; and unless the whole notion of a fixed monarchy, and a balance

* A hog to be fatted at the rate of 120,000*l.* a year.

of three powers is a mere fiction and a dream, the royal portion of the composition must be allowed to have some power to produce some effect upon the quality of the whole. It is not denied that George III. sought to rule too much; it is not maintained that he had a right to be perpetually sacrificing all other considerations to the preservation or extension of his prerogative. But that he only discharged the duty of his station by thinking for himself, acting according to his conscientious opinion, and using his influence for giving these opinions effect, cannot be denied unless by those who, being averse to monarchy, and yet dreading a commonwealth, would incur all the cost, and all the far worse evils, of a form of government which they think the worst, rather than seek for a better, and would purchase the continuance of the greatest evils at the highest price, rather than encounter the risk of a change.*

That this Prince in his private life had many virtues, we have already stated, with the qualification annexed of these being always, even as regarded his strong domestic affections, kept in subjection to his feelings as a sovereign. With regard to his general disposition, it must be added that he belonged to a class of men, not by any means the worst, but far beneath the best, in the constitution of their hearts, those who neither can forget a kindness nor an injury. Nor can this sketch be more appropriately closed than with two remarkable examples of the implacable hatred he bore his enemies, and the steady affection with which he cherished his friends.

Among the former, Lord Chatham held the most conspicuous place, apparently from the time of the American question; for at an earlier period his correspondence with that great man was most friendly. But the following is his answer to Lord North's proposal that Lord Chatham's pension should be settled in

* George III. set one example which is worthy of imitation, in all times. He refused to be made a state puppet in his minister's hands, and to let his name be used either by men whom he despised, or for purposes which he disapproved. Nor could any one ever accuse him of ruling by favourites; still less could any one, by pretending to be the people's choice, impose himself on his vigorous understanding.

reversion on his younger son, afterwards so well known as the second William Pitt. It bears date August 9th, 1775. "The making Lord Chatham's family suffer for the conduct of their father is not in the least agreeable to my sentiments. But I should choose to know him to be totally unable to appear again on the public stage before I agree to any offer of that kind, lest it should be wrongly construed into a fear of him; and indeed his political conduct the last winter was so abandoned, that he must, in the eyes of the dispassionate, have totally undone all the merits of his former conduct. As to any gratitude to be expected from him or his family, the whole tenor of their lives has shown them void of that most honourable sentiment. But *when decrepitude or death puts an end to him as a trumpet of sedition,* I shall make no difficulty in placing the second son's name, instead of the father's, and making up the pension 3000*l.*"

From the truly savage feelings which this letter displays, it is agreeable to turn the eye upon so amiable a contrast as the following affords, written to the minister whom he ever loved beyond all his other servants, and only quitted when the Coalition united him to the Whigs:—

"Having paid the last arrears (Sept. 1777) on the Civil List, I must now do the same for you. I have understood, from your hints, that you have been in debt ever since you settled in life. I must therefore insist that you allow me to assist you with 10,000*l*, or 15,000*l.*, or even 20,000*l.*, if that will be sufficient. It will be easy for you to make an arrangement, or at proper times to take up that sum. You know me very ill if you think not that, of all the letters I ever wrote to you, this one gives me the greatest pleasure; and I want no other return but your being convinced that I love you as well as a man of worth, as I esteem you as a minister. Your conduct at a critical moment I never can forget."

These remarkable and characteristic letters naturally introduce to us his two celebrated correspondents, Lord Chatham and Lord North; the one, until Mr. Fox came

upon the stage, of all his adversaries, the one he pursued with the most unrelenting hatred; the other, of all his servants, the one for whom he felt the warmest friendship.

LORD CHATHAM.

There is hardly any man in modern times, with the exception, perhaps, of Lord Somers, who fills so large a space in our history, and of whom we know so little, as Lord Chatham; and yet he is the person to whom every one would at once point, if desired to name the most successful statesman and most brilliant orator that this country ever produced. Of Lord Somers, indeed, we can scarcely be said to know anything at all. That he was a person of unimpeachable integrity, a judge of great capacity and learning, a firm friend of liberty, but a cautious and safe counsellor in most difficult emergencies, all are ready to acknowledge. But the authority which he possessed among his contemporaries, the influence which his sound and practical wisdom exercised over their proceedings, the services which he was thus enabled to render in steering the constitution safe through the most trying times, and saving us from arbitrary power without paying the price of our liberties in anarchy and bloodshed,—nay, conducting the whole proceedings of the revolution with all the deliberation, and almost in the forms, of an ordinary legal proceeding; have surrounded his name with a mild yet imperishable glory, which, in the contrast of our dark ignorance respecting all the particulars and details of his life, gives the figure something altogether mysterious and ideal. It is now unfortunately too late, by supplying this information, to fill up the outline which the meagre records of his times have left us. But it is singular how much of Lord Chatham, who flourished within the memory of the present generation, still rests upon vague tradition. As a statesman, indeed, he is known to us by the events which history has recorded to have happened under his administration. Yet even of his share in bringing these about, little has been preserved of detail. So, fragments of his speeches have been handed down to us,

but these bear so very small a proportion to the prodigious fame which his eloquence has left behind it, that far more is manifestly lost than has reached us; while of his written compositions but a few letters have hitherto been given to the world.

The imperfect state of Parliamentary reporting is the great cause of this blank. From the time of his entering the House of Commons to that of his quitting it, the privileges of Parliament almost wholly precluded the possibility of regular and full accounts of debates being communicated to the public. At one period they were given under feigned names, as if held in the Senate of Rome by the ancient orators and statesmen; at another they were conveyed under the initials only of the names borne by the real speakers. Even when, somewhat later, these disguises were thrown aside, the speeches were composed by persons who had not been present at the debates, but gleaned a few heads of each speaker's topics from some one who had heard him; and the fullest and most authentic of all those accounts are merely the meagre outline of the subjects touched upon, preserved in the Diaries of Correspondence of some contemporary politicians, and presenting not even an approximation to the execution of the orators. Thus many of Lord Chatham's earlier speeches in the House of Commons, as now preserved, were avowedly the composition of Dr. Johnson, whose measured style, formal periods, balanced antitheses, and total want of pure racy English, betray their author at every line, while each debater is made to speak exactly in the same manner. For some years after he ceased to report, or rather to manufacture, that is, from 1751 downwards, a Dr. Gordon furnished the newspapers with reports, consisting of much more accurate accounts of what had passed in debate, but without pretending to give more than the mere substance of the several speeches. The debates upon the American Stamp Act, in 1765, are the first that can be said to have been preserved at all, through the happy accident of Lord Charlemont, assisted by Sir Robert Deane, taking an extraordinary interest in the subject as bearing upon the grievances of Ire-

land; and accordingly they have handed down to us some notes, from internal evidence plainly authentic, of Lord Chatham's celebrated speeches upon that question. A few remains of his great displays in the House of Lords have, in like manner, been preserved, chiefly in the two speeches reported by Mr. Hugh Boyd; the second of which, the most celebrated of all, upon the employment of the Indians in the American war, there is reason to believe was revised and corrected by Lord Chatham himself; and if so, it was certainly the only one that ever underwent his revision. If any one will only compare the extreme slenderness of these grounds upon which to estimate a speaker's claim to renown, or to judge of the characteristics of his eloquence, with the ample means which we have of studying the merits of almost all the ancient orators, and examining their distinguishing qualities, he will be sensible how much any idea which we can form of Lord Chatham's oratory must rest upon tradition, that is, upon the accounts left by contemporary writers of its effects: and how little we are enabled to judge for ourselves by examining the specimens that remain of his composition. It seems little short of presumption, after this statement, to attempt including his character as an orator in the sketch which may be given of this great man. But the testimony of contemporaries may so far be helped by what remains of the oratory itself, as to make some faint conceptions attainable of that eloquence which, for effect at least, has surpassed any known in modern times.

The first place among the great qualities which distinguished Lord Chatham, is unquestionably due to firmness of purpose, resolute determination in the pursuit of his objects. This was the characteristic of the younger Brutus, as he said, who had spared his life to fall by his hand—*Quicquid vult, id valde vult;* and although extremely apt to exist in excess, it must be admitted to be the foundation of all true greatness of character. Everything, however, depends upon the endowments in company of which it is found; and in Lord Chatham these were of a very high order. The quickness with which he could ascertain his object, and dis-

cover his road to it, was fully commensurate with his perseverance and his boldness in pursuing it; the firmness of grasp with which he held his advantage was fully equalled by the rapidity of the glance with which he discovered it. Add to this, a mind eminently fertile in resources; a courage which nothing could daunt in the choice of his means; a resolution equally indomitable in their application; a genius, in short, original and daring, which bounded over the petty obstacles raised by ordinary men—their squeamishness, and their precedents, and their forms, and their regularities—and forced away its path through the entanglements of this base undergrowth to the worthy object ever in view, the prosperity and the renown of his country. Far superior to the paltry objects of a grovelling ambition, and regardless alike of party and of personal considerations, he constantly set before his eyes the highest duty of a public man, to further the interests of his species. In pursuing his course towards that goal, he disregarded alike the frowns of power and the gales of popular applause, exposed himself undaunted to the vengeance of the Court, while he battled against its corruptions, and confronted, unappalled, the rudest shocks of public indignation, while he resisted the dictates of pernicious agitators, and could conscientiously exclaim, with an illustrious statesman of antiquity, "Ego hoc animo semper fui ut invidiam virtute partam, gloriam non invidiam putarem!"

Nothing could be more entangled than the foreign policy of this country at the time when he undertook the supreme direction of her affairs; nothing could be more disastrous than the aspect of her fortunes in every quarter of the globe. With a single ally in Europe, the King of Prussia, and him beset by a combination of all the continental powers in unnatural union to effect his destruction; with an army of insignificant amount, and commanded by men only desirous of grasping at the emoluments, without doing the duties or incurring the risks of their profession; with a navy that could hardly keep the sea, and whose chiefs vied with their comrades on shore in earning the character given them by the

new Minister,—of being utterly unfit to be trusted in any enterprise accompanied with the least appearance of danger; with a generally prevailing dislike of both services, which at once repressed all desire of joining either, and damped all public spirit in the country, by extinguishing all hope of success, and even all love of glory—it was hardly possible for a nation to be placed in circumstances more inauspicious to military exertion; and yet war raged in every quarter of the world where our dominion extended, while the territories of our only ally, as well as those of our own sovereign in Germany, were invaded by France, and her forces by sea and land menaced our shores. In the distant possessions of the Crown the same want of enterprise and of spirit prevailed. Armies in the West were paralysed by the inaction of a captian who would hardly take the pains of writing a despatch to chronicle the nonentity of his operations: and in the East, while frightful disasters were brought upon our settlements by Barbarian powers, the only military capacity that appeared in their defence was the accidental display of genius and valour by a merchant's clerk, who thus raised himself to celebrity.* In this forlorn state of affairs, which rendered it as impossible to think of peace, as hopeless to continue the yet inevitable war, the base and the sordid views of politicians kept pace with the mean spirit of the military caste; and parties were split or united, not upon any difference or agreement of public principle, but upon mere questions of patronage and of share in the public spoil, while all seemed alike actuated by one only passion—the thirst alternately of power and of gain.

As soon as Mr. Pitt took the helm, the steadiness of the hand that held it was instantly felt in every motion of the vessel. There was no more of wavering counsels, of torpid inaction, of listless expectancy, of abject despondency. His firmness gave confidence, his spirit roused courage, his vigilance secured exertion, in every department under his sway. Each man, from the first

* Mr. Clive, afterwards Lord Clive.

Lord of the Admiralty down to the most humble clerk in the Victualling office—each soldier, from the Commander-in-chief to the most obscure contractor or commissary—now felt assured that he was acting or was indolent under the eye of one who knew his duties and his means as well as his own, and who would very certainly make all defaulters, whether through misfeasance or through nonfeasance, accountable for whatever detriment the commonwealth might sustain at their hands. Over his immediate coadjutors his influence swiftly obtained an ascendant which it ever after retained uninterrupted. Upon his first proposition for changing the conduct of the war, he stood single among his colleagues, and tendered his resignation should they persist in their dissent; they at once succumbed, and from that hour ceased to have an opinion of their own upon any branch of the public affairs. Nay, so absolutely was he determined to have the control of those measures, of which he knew the responsibility rested upon him alone, that he insisted upon the first Lord of the Admiralty not having the correspondence of his own department; and no less eminent a naval character than Lord Anson, as well as his junior Lords, was obliged to sign the naval orders issued by Mr. Pitt, while the writing was covered over from their eyes!

The effects of this change in the whole management of the public business, and in all the plans of the Government as well as in their execution, were speedily made manifest to the world. The German troops were sent home, and a well-regulated militia being established to defend the country, a large disposable force was distributed over the various positions whence the enemy might be annoyed. France, attacked, on some points, and menaced on others, was compelled to retire from Germany, soon afterwards suffered the most disastrous defeats, and instead of threatening England and her allies with invasion, had to defend herself against attack, suffering severely in several of her most important naval stations. No less than sixteen islands and settlements, and fortresses of importance, were taken from her in America, and Asia, and Africa, including all her West

Indian colonies, except St. Domingo, and all her settlements in the East. The whole important province of Canada was likewise conquered; and the Havannah was taken from Spain. Besides this, the seas were swept clear of the fleets that had so lately been insulting our colonies, and even our coasts. Many general actions were fought and gained; one among them the most decisive that had ever been fought by our navy. Thirty-six sail of the line were taken or destroyed; fifty frigates; forty-five sloops of war. So brilliant a course of uninterrupted success had never, in modern times, attended the arms of any nation carrying on war with other states equal to it in civilization, and nearly a match in power. But it is a more glorious feature in this unexampled Administration which history has to record, when it adds, that all public distress had disappeared; that all discontent in any quarter, both of the colonies and parent state, had ceased; that no oppression was anywhere practised, no abuse suffered to prevail; that no encroachments were made upon the rights of the subject, no malversation tolerated in the possessors of power; and that England, for the first time and for the last time, presented the astonishing picture of a nation supporting without murmur a widely-extended and costly war, and a people, hitherto torn with conflicting parties, so united in the service of the commonwealth that the voice of faction had ceased in the land, and any discordant whisper was heard no more. "These" (said the son of his first and most formidable adversary, Walpole, when informing his correspondent abroad, that the session, as usual, had ended without any kind of opposition or even of debate),—"These are the doings of Mr. Pitt, and they are wondrous in our eyes!"

To genius irregularity is incident, and the greatest genius is often marked by eccentricity, as if it disdained to move in a vulgar orbit. Hence he who is fitted by his nature, and trained by his habits, to be an accomplished "pilot in extremity," and whose inclinations carry him forth "to seek the deep when the waves run high," may be found, if not, "to steer too near the shore," yet to despise the sunken rocks which they that can

only be trusted in calm weather would have more surely avoided. To this rule it cannot be said that Lord Chatham afforded any exception; and although a plot had certainly been formed to eject him from the Ministry, leaving the chief control of affairs in the feeble hands of Lord Bute, whose only support was Court favour, and whose chief talent lay in an expertness at intrigue, yet there can be little doubt that this scheme was only rendered practicable by the hostility which the great Minister's unbending habits, his contempt of ordinary men, and his neglect of every-day matters, had raised against him among all the creatures both of Downing-street and St. James's. In fact, his colleagues, who necessarily felt humbled by his superiority, were needlessly mortified by the constant display of it; and it would have betokened a still higher reach of understanding, as well as a purer fabric of patriotism, if he whose great capacity threw those subordinates into the shade, and before whose vigour in action they were sufficiently willing to yield, had united a little suavity in his demeanour with his extraordinary powers, nor made it always necessary for them to acknowledge as well as to feel their inferiority. It is certain that the insulting arrangement of the Admiralty, to which reference has been already made, while it lowered that department in the public opinion, rendered all connected with it his personal enemies; and, indeed, though there have since his days been Prime Ministers whom he would never have suffered to sit even as puisne lords at his boards, yet were one like himself again to govern the country, the Admiralty chief, who might be far inferior to Lord Anson, would never submit to the humiliation inflicted upon that gallant and skilful captain. Mr. Pitt's policy seemed formed upon the assumption that either each public functionary was equal to himself in boldness, activity, and resource, or that he was to preside over and animate each department in person. Such was his confidence in his own powers, that he reversed the maxim of governing, never to force your way where you can win it; and always disdained to insinuate where he could dash in, or to persuade where he could

command. It thus happened that his colleagues were but nominally coadjutors, and though they durst not thwart him, yet rendered no heart-service to aid his schemes. Indeed it has clearly appeared since his time that they were chiefly induced to yield him implicit obedience, and leave the undivided direction of all operations in his hands, by the expectation that the failure of what they were wont to sneer at as "Mr. Pitt's visions" would turn the tide of public opinion against him, and prepare his downfall from a height of which they felt that there was no one but himself able to dispossess him.

The true test of a great man—that at least which must secure his place among the higher order of great men—is his having been in advance of his age. This it is which decides whether or not he has carried forward the grand plan of human improvement; has conformed his views and adapted his conduct to the existing circumstances of society, or changed those so as to better its condition; has been one of the lights of the world, or only reflected the borrowed rays of former luminaries, and sat in the same shade with the rest of his generation at the same twilight or the same dawn. Tried by this test, the younger Pitt cannot certainly be said to have lived before his time, or shed upon the age to which he belonged the illumination of a more advanced civilization and more inspired philosophy. He came far too early into public life, and was too suddenly plunged into the pool of office, to give him time for the study and the reflection which can alone open to any mind, how vigorous soever may be its natural constitution, the views of a deep and original wisdom. Accordingly it would be difficult to glean, from all his measures and all his speeches, anything like the fruits of inventive genius; or to mark any token of his mind having gone before the very ordinary routine of the day, as if familiar with any ideas that did not pass through the most vulgar understandings. His father's intellect was of a higher order; he had evidently, though without much education, and with no science of any kind, yet reflected deeply upon the principles of human action, well studied the nature of men, and pondered upon the struc-

ture of society. His reflections frequently teem with the fruits of such meditation, to which his constantly feeble health perhaps gave rise rather than any natural proneness to contemplative life, from whence his taste must have been alien; for he was eminently a man of action. His appeals to the feelings and passions were also the result of the same reflective habits, and the acquaintance with the human heart which they had given him. But if we consider his opinions, though liberal and enlightened upon every particular question, they rather may be regarded as felicitous from their adaptation to the actual circumstances in which he was called upon to devise or to act, than as indicating that he had seen very far into future times, and anticipated the philosophy which further experience should teach to our more advanced age of the world. To take two examples from the two subjects upon which he had both thought the most, and been the most strenuously engaged in handling practically as a statesman,—our relations with France and with America:—The old and narrow notions of natural enmity with the one, and natural sovereignty over the other, were the guides of his whole opinions and conduct in those great arguments. To cultivate the relations of peace with our nearest neighbour, as the first of blessings to both nations, each being able to do the other most good in amity and most harm in hostility, never appears to have entered into the system of policy, enlightened by that fiery soul, which could only see glory or even safety in the precarious and transient domination bestowed by a successful war. To become the fast friends of those colonies which we had planted and long retained under our protecting government, and thus both to profit ourselves and them the more by suffering them to be as independent as we are, was an idea that certainly could not be said once to have crossed his impetuous and uncompromising mind; for it had often been entertained by him, but only to be rejected with indignation and abhorrence, as if the independence of America were the loss of our national existence. Upon all less important questions, whether touching our continental or our colonial policy, his

opinion was to the full as sound, and his views as enlarged, as those of any statesman of his age; but it would not be correct to affirm that on those, the cardinal and therefore the trying points of the day, he was materially in advance of his own times.

If we turn from the statesman to survey the orator, our examination must be far less satisfactory, because our materials are extremely imperfect, from the circumstances already adverted to. There is indeed hardly any eloquence, of ancient or of modern times, of which so little that can be relied on as authentic has been preserved; unless perhaps that of Pericles, Julius Cæsar, and Lord Bolingbroke. Of the actions of the two first we have sufficient records, as we have of Lord Chatham's; of their speeches we have little that can be regarded as genuine; although, by unquestionable tradition, we know that each of them was second only to the greatest orator of their respective countries;* while of Bolingbroke we only know, from Dean Swift, that he was the most accomplished speaker of his time; and it is related of Mr. Pitt (the younger), that when the conversation rolled upon lost works, and some said they should prefer restoring the books of Livy, some of Tacitus, and some a Latin tragedy, he at once decided for a speech of Bolingbroke. What we know of his own father's oratory is much more to be gleaned from contemporary panegyrics, and accounts of its effects, than from the scanty, and for the most part doubtful, remains which have reached us.

All accounts, however, concur in representing those effects to have been prodigious. The spirit and vehemence which animated its greater passages—their perfect application to the subject-matter of debate—the appositeness of his invective to the individual assailed—the boldness of the feats which he ventured upon—the grandeur of the ideas which he unfolded—the heart-

* Thucydides gives three speeches of Pericles, which he may very possibly have in great part composed for him. Sallust's speech of Cæsar is manifestly the writer's own composition; indeed, it is in the exact style of the one he puts into Cato's mouth, that is, in his own style.

stirring nature of his appeals,—are all confessed by the united testimony of his contemporaries; and the fragments which remain bear out to a considerable extent such representations; nor are we likely to be misled by those fragments, for the more striking portions were certainly the ones least likely to be either forgotten or fabricated. To these mighty attractions was added the imposing, the animating, the commanding power of a countenance singularly expressive; an eye so piercing that hardly any one could stand its glare: and a manner altogether singularly striking, original and characteristic, notwithstanding a peculiarly defective and even awkward action. Latterly, indeed, his infirmities precluded all action; and he is described as standing in the House of Lords leaning upon his crutch, and speaking for ten minutes together in an under-tone of voice scarcely audible, but raising his notes to their full pitch when he broke out into one of his grand bursts of invective or exclamation. But, in his earlier time, his whole manner is represented as having been beyond conception animated and imposing. Indeed the things which he effected principally by means of it, or at least which nothing but a most striking and commanding tone could have made it possible to attempt, almost exceed belief. Some of these sallies are indeed examples of that approach made to the ludicrous by the sublime, which has been charged upon him as a prevailing fault, and represented under the name of *Charlatanerie*,—a favourite phrase with his adversaries, as in latter times it has been with the ignorant undervaluers of Lord Erskine. It is related that once in the House of Commons he began a speech with the words "Sugar, Mr. Speaker,"—and then, observing a smile to pervade the audience, he paused, looked fiercely around, and with a loud voice, rising in its notes and swelling into vehement anger, he is said to have pronounced again the word "Sugar!" three times, and having thus quelled the house, and extinguished every appearance of levity or laughter, turned round and disdainfully asked, "Who will laugh at sugar now?" We have the anecdote upon good traditional authority; that it was believed by those

who had the best means of knowing Lord Chatham is certain; and this of itself shows their sense of the extraordinary powers of his manner, and the reach of his audacity in trusting to those powers.

There can be no doubt that of reasoning,—of sustained and close arguments,—his speeches had but little. His statements were desultory, though striking, perhaps not very distinct, certainly not at all detailed, and as certainly every way inferior to those of his celebrated son. If he did not reason cogently, he assuredly did not compress his matter vigorously. He was anything rather than a concise or a short speaker; not that his great passages were at all diffuse; or in the least degree loaded with superfluous words; but he was prolix in the whole texture of his discourse, and he was certainly the first who introduced into our senate the practice, adopted in the American war by Mr. Burke, and continued by others, of long speeches,—speeches of two and three hours, by which oratory has gained but little, and business less. His discourse was, however, fully informed with matter; his allusions to analogous subjects, and his reference to the history of past events, were frequent; his expression of his own opinions was copious and free, and stood very generally in the place of any elaborate reasoning in their support. A noble statement of enlarged views, a generous avowal of dignified sentiments, a manly and somewhat severe contempt for all petty or mean views—whether their baseness proceeded from narrow understanding or from corrupt bias—always pervaded his whole discourse; and, more than any other orator since Demosthenes, he was distinguished by the grandeur of feeling with which he regarded, and the amplitude of survey which he cast upon the subject-matters of debate. His invective was unsparing and hard to be endured, although he was a less eminent master of sarcasm than his son, and rather overwhelmed his antagonist with the burst of words and vehement indignation, than wounded him by the edge of ridicule, or tortured him with the gall of bitter scorn, or fixed his arrow in the wound by the barb of epigram. These things seemed, as it were, to betoken too much labour

and too much art—more labour than was consistent with absolute scorn—more art than could stand with heartfelt rage, or entire contempt inspired by the occasion, at the moment, and on the spot. But his great passages, those by which he has come down to us, those which gave his eloquence its peculiar character, and to which its dazzling success was owing, were as sudden and unexpected as they were natural. Every one was taken by surprise when they rolled forth—every one felt them to be so natural, that he could hardly understand why he had not thought of them himself, although into no one's imagination had they ever entered. If the quality of being natural without being obvious is a pretty correct description of felicitous expression, or what is called fine writing, it is a yet more accurate representation of fine passages, or felicitous *hits* in speaking. In these all popular assemblies take boundless delight; by these above all others are the minds of an audience at pleasure moved or controlled. They form the grand charm of Lord Chatham's oratory; they were the distinguishing excellence of his great predecessor, and gave him at will to wield the fierce democratie of Athens, and to fulmine over Greece.

It was the sagacious remark of one of the most acute of critics,* as well as historical inquirers, that criticism never would be of any value until critics cited innumerable examples. In sketching the character of Lord Chatham's oratory this becomes the more necessary, that so few now living can have any recollection of it, and that all our knowledge of its peculiar nature rests upon a few scattered fragments. There is, however, some security for our deducing from these a correct notion of it, because they certainly, according to all accounts, were the portions of his discourse which produced the most extraordinary effect, on which its fame rests, and by which its quality is to be ascertained. A few of these may, therefore, be referred to in closing the present imperfect outline of this great man's eloquence.

His remark on confidence, when it was asked by

* Hume—Essays.

the ministry of 1766, for whom he had some forbearance rather than any great respect, is well known. He said their characters were fair enough, and he was always glad to see such persons engaged in the public service; but, turning to them with a smile, very courteous, but not very respectful, he said—"Confide in you? Oh no—you must pardon me, gentlemen—*youth* is the season of credulity—confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom!"

Some one, having spoken of the "obstinacy of America," said "that she was almost in open rebellion." Mr. Pitt exclaimed, "I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to let themselves be made slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest!"—Then, speaking of the attempt to keep her down—"In a just cause of quarrel you may crush America to atoms; but in this crying injustice," (Stamp Act)—"I am one who will lift up my hands against it—in such a cause even your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man; she would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace—to sheathe the sword, not in its scabbard, but in the bowels of your countrymen?" —It was in this debate that Mr. Burke first spoke, and Mr. Pitt praised his speech in very flattering terms.

"Those iron barons (for so I may call them when compared with the silken barons of modern days) were the guardians of the people; and three words of their barbarous Latin, *nullus liber homo*, are worth all the classics. Yet their virtues were never tried in a question so important as this," (The Pretension of Privilege in the House of Commons),—"A breach is made in the Constitution—the battlements are dismantled—the citadel is open to the first invader—the walls totter—the place is no longer tenable—what then remains for us but to stand foremost in the breach, to repair it, or to perish in it?—Unlimited power corrupts the possessor, and this I know, that where law ends, there tyranny begins."

In reference to the same subject, the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes, he exclaimed in a subsequent debate—"The Constitution at this moment stands violated. If the breach be effectually repaired the people will return to tranquillity of themselves. If not, let discord reign for ever!—I know to what point my language will appear directed. But I have the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without fear or reserve. Rather than the Constitution should be tamely given up, and our birthright be surrendered to a despotic Minister, I hope, my Lords, old as I am, that I shall see the question brought to an issue, and fairly tried between the people and the government."—Again he said—"Magna Charta—the Petition of Right—the Bill of Rights—form the Bible of the English Constitution. Had some of the King's unhappy predecessors trusted less to the Commentary of their advisers, and been better read in the Text itself, the glorious Revolution might have remained only possible in theory, and their fate would not now have stood upon record, a formidable example to all their successors."—"No man more than I respects the just authority of the House of Commons—no man would go farther to defend it. But beyond the line of the Constitution, like every exercise of arbitrary power, it becomes illegal, threatening tyranny to the people, destruction to the state. Power without right is the most detestable object that can be offered to the human imagination; it is not only pernicious to those whom it subjects, but works its own destruction. *Res detestabilis et caduca.* Under pretence of declaring law, the Commons have made a law, a law for their own case, and have united in the same persons the offices of legislator and party and judge."

These fine passages, conveying sentiments so noble and so wise, may be read with advantage by the present House of Commons when it shall again be called on to resist the judges of the land, and to break its laws, by opening a shop for the sale of libels.

His character—drawn, he says, from long experience—of the Spaniards, the high-minded chivalrous Casti-

lians, we believe to be as just as it is severe. Speaking of the affair of Falkland's Islands, he said,—"They are as mean and crafty as they are insolent and proud. I never yet met with an instance of candour or dignity in their proceedings; nothing but low cunning, artifice and trick. I was compelled to talk to them in a peremptory language. I submitted my advice for an immediate war to a trembling council. You all know the consequences of its being rejected."—The speech from the throne had stated that the Spanish Government had disowned the act of its officer. Lord Chatham said—"There never was a more odious, a more infamous falsehood imposed on a great nation. It degrades the King, it insults the Parliament. His Majesty has been advised to affirm an absolute falsehood. My Lords, I beg your attention, and I hope I shall be understood when I repeat, that it is an absolute, a palpable falsehood. The King of Spain disowns the thief, while he leaves him unpunished, and profits by his theft. In vulgar English, he is the receiver of stolen goods, and should be treated accordingly." How would all the country, at least all the canting portion of it, resound with the cry of "Coarse! vulgar! brutal!" if such epithets and such comparisons as these were used in any debate now-a-days, whether among the "silken barons," or the "squeamish Commons" of our time!

In 1775 he made a most brilliant speech on the war. Speaking of General Gage's inactivity, he said it could not be blamed; it was inevitable. "But what a miserable condition," he exclaimed, "is ours, where disgrace is prudence, and where it is necessary to be contemptible! You must repeal these acts," he said, (alluding to the Boston Port and Massachusetts Bay Bills,) "and you WILL repeal them. I pledge myself for it, that you will repeal them. I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed." Every one knows how true this prophecy proved. The concluding sentence of the speech has been often cited,—"If the ministers persevere in misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown: but I

will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."

Again, in 1777, after describing the cause of the war and "the traffic and barter driven with every little pitiful German Prince that sells his subjects to the shambles of a foreign country," he adds, "The mercenary aid on which you rely irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of your enemies, whom you overrun with the sordid sons of rapine and of plunder, devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty! If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms, never! never! never!" Such language used in the modern days of ultra loyalty and extreme decorum, would call down upon his head who employed it, the charge of encouraging the rebels, and partaking as an accomplice in their treasons.

It was upon this memorable occasion that he made the famous reply to Lord Suffolk, who had said, in reference to employing the Indians, that "we were justified in using all the means which God and nature had put into our hands." The circumstance of Lord Chatham having himself revised this speech is an inducement to insert it here at length.

"I am astonished," exclaimed Lord Chatham, as he rose, "shocked, to hear such principles confessed, to hear them avowed, in this House or in this country; principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian.

"My Lords, I did not intend to have trespassed again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation. I feel myself impelled by every duty. My Lords, we are called upon, as members of this House, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions, standing near the throne, polluting the ear of majesty. *That God and nature put into our hands!*—I know not what idea that Lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife, to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating; literally, my Lords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles! Such horrible notions shock every precept of religion, divine and natural, and every generous feeling of humanity; and, my Lords, they

shock every sentiment of honour; they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity.

"These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand most decisive indignation. I call upon that Right Reverend Bench, those holy ministers of the gospel, and pious pastors of the Church: I conjure them to join in the holy work, and to vindicate the religion of their God. I appeal to the wisdom and the law of this learned Bench, to defend and support the justice of their country. I call upon the Bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn, upon the learned Judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honour of your Lordships to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country to vindicate the national character. I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble Lord frowns with indignation at THE DISGRACE OF HIS COUNTRY! In vain he led your victorious fleets against the boasted Armada of Spain; in vain he defended and established the honour, the liberties, the religion, the Protestant religion of his country, against the arbitrary cruelties of Popery and the Inquisition, if these more than Popish cruelties and inquisitorial practices are let loose amongst us, to turn forth into our settlements, among our ancient connexions, friends, and relations, the merciless cannibal, thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child—to send forth the infidel savage—against whom? Against your Protestant brethren; to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name with these horrible hell-hounds of savage war—*hell-hounds, I say, of savage war*. Spain armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of America, and we improve on the inhuman example of even Spanish cruelty: we turn loose these savage hell-hounds against our brethren and countrymen in America, of the same language, laws, liberties, and religion, endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity. My Lords, this awful subject, so important to our honour, our constitution, and our religion, demands the most solemn and effectual inquiry; and I again call upon your Lordships, and the united powers of the state, to examine it thoroughly and decisively, and to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy Prelates of our religion to do away these iniquities from among us; let them perform a lustration—let them purify this House and this country from this sin.

"My Lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more; but my feelings and my indignation were too strong to have said less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, or have reposed my head on my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such preposterous and enormous principles."*

* There hangs so much doubt upon the charge brought against Lord Chatham, of having himself employed the Indians in the former war, that the subject is reserved for the appendix.

There are other celebrated passages of his speeches in all men's mouths. His indignation and contemptuous answer to the Minister's boast of driving the Americans before the army—"I might as well think of driving them before me with this crutch!"—is well known. Perhaps the finest of them all is his allusion to the maxim of English law, that every man's house is his castle. "The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail—its roof may shake—the wind may blow through it—the storm may enter—the rain may enter—but the King of England cannot enter!—all his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!"

These examples may serve to convey a pretty accurate idea of the peculiar vein of eloquence which distinguished this great man's speeches. It was of the very highest order; vehement, fiery, close to the subject, concise, sometimes eminently, even boldly figurative; it was original and surprising, yet quite natural. To call it argumentative would be an abuse of terms; but it had always a sufficient foundation of reason to avoid any appearance of inconsistency, or error, or wandering from the point. So the greatest passages in the Greek orations were very far from being such as could stand the test of close examination in regard to their argument. Yet would it be hypercritical indeed to object that Demosthenes, in the most celebrated burst of all ancient eloquence, argues for his policy being rewarded although it led to defeat, by citing the example of public honours having been bestowed upon those who fell in gaining five great victories.

Some have compared Mr. Fox's eloquence to that of Demosthenes; but it resembled Lord Chatham's just as much, if not more. It was incomparably more argumentative than either the Greek or the English orators; neither of whom carried on chains of close reasoning as he did, though both kept close to their subject. It was, however, exceedingly the reverse of the Attic orator's in method, in diction, in conciseness. It had nothing like arrangement of any kind. Except in the more vehement passages, its diction was perhaps as

slovenly, certainly as careless as possible, betokening indeed a contempt of all accurate composition. It was diffuse in the highest degree, and abounded in repetitions. While the Greek was concise, almost to being jejune, the Englishman was diffuse, almost to being prolix. How the notion of comparing the two together ever could have prevailed, seems unaccountable, unless it be that men have supposed them alike because they were both vehement, and both kept the subject in view rather than run after ornament. But that the most elaborate and artificial compositions in the world should have been likened to the most careless, and natural, and unprepared, that were ever delivered in public, would seem wholly incredible if it were not true. The bursts of Mr. Fox, however, though less tersely and concisely composed, certainly have some resemblance to Lord Chatham's, only that they betray far less fancy, and, however vehement and fiery, are incomparably less bold. Mr. Pitt's oratory, though admirably suited to its purpose, and as perfect a business kind of speaking as ever was heard, certainly resembled none of the three others who have been named. In point of genius, unless perhaps for sarcasm, he was greatly their inferior; although, from the unbroken fluency of his appropriate language, and the power of an eminently sonorous voice, he produced the most prodigious effect.

It remains to speak of Lord Chatham as a private man, and he appears to have been in all respects exemplary and amiable. His disposition was exceedingly affectionate. The pride, bordering upon insolence, in which he showed himself encased to the world, fell naturally from him, and without any effort to put it off, as he crossed the threshold of his own door. To all his family he was simple, kindly, and gentle. His pursuits were of a nature that showed how much he loved to unbend himself. He delighted in poetry, and other light reading; was fond of music; loved the country; took peculiar pleasure in gardening; and had even an extremely happy taste in laying out grounds. His early education appears to have been further prosecuted afterwards; and he was familiar with the Latin classics,

although there is no reason to believe that he had much acquaintance with the Greek. In all our own classical writers he was well versed; and his time was much given to reading them. A correspondence with his nephew, which Lord Grenville published about five and thirty years ago, showed how simple and classical his tastes were, how affectionate his feelings, and how strong his sense of both moral and religious duty. These letters are reprinted in a work now in the course of publication by the family of Lord Chatham, because the answers have since been recovered: and it contains a great body of other letters both to and from him. Amongst the latter, are to be found constant tokens of his amiable disposition.

The most severe judge of human actions, the critic whose searching eye looks for defects in every portrait, and regards it as a fiction, not a likeness, when he fails to find any, will naturally ask if such a character as Lord Chatham's could be without reproach: if feelings so strong never boiled over in those passions which are dangerous to virtue; if fervour of soul such as his could be at all times kept within the bounds which separate the adjoining provinces of vehemence and intemperance? Nor will he find reason to doubt the reality of the picture which he is scrutinizing when we have added the traits that undeniably disfigured it. Some we have already thrown in; but they rather are shades that give effect and relief to the rest, than deformities or defects. It must now be further recorded, that not only was he impracticable, difficult beyond all men to act with, overbearing, impetuously insisting upon his own views being adopted by all as infallible, utterly regardless of other men's opinions when he had formed his own, as little disposed to profit by the lights of their wisdom as to avail himself of their co-operative efforts in action—all this is merely the excess of his great qualities running loose, uncontrolled—but he appears to have been very far from sustaining the exalted pitch of magnanimous independence, and utter disregard of sublunary interests which we should expect him to have reached and kept as a matter of course, from a more cursory glance

at the mould in which his lofty character was cast. Without allowing considerable admixture of the clay which forms earthly mortals to have entered into his composition, how can we account for the violence of his feelings, when George III. showed him some small signs of kindness in the closet, upon his giving up the seals of office? "I confess, sir, I had but too much reason to expect your majesty's displeasure. I had not come prepared for this exceeding goodness.—Pardon me, sir," he passionately exclaimed—"it overpowers—it oppresses me!" and he burst into tears in the presence of one who, as a moment reflection must have convinced him, was playing a part to undermine his character, destroy his influence, and counteract all his great designs for his country's good. But some misplaced sentiments of loyalty may have produced this strange paroxysm of devotion. The colour assumed by his gratitude for favours conferred upon his family and himself was of a more vulgar hue, and still less harmonized with the Great Commoner's exalted nature. On learning the King's intention to grant him a pension (in order effectually to undo him), he writes to Lord Bute a letter full of the most humiliating effusions of extravagant thankfulness—speaks of "being confounded with the King's condescension in deigning to bestow one thought on the mode of extending to him his royal beneficence"—considers "any mark of approbation flowing from such a spontaneous source of clemency as his comfort and his glory"—and prostrates himself in the very dust for daring to refuse the kind of provision tendered "by the King in a manner so infinitely gracious"—and proposing, instead of it, a pension for his family. When this prayer was granted, the effusions of gratitude "for these unbounded effects of beneficence and grace which the most benign of Sovereigns has condescended to bestow," are still more extravagant: and "he dares to hope that the same royal benevolence which showers on the unmeritorious such unlimited benefits may deign to accept the genuine tribute of the truly feeling heart with equal condescension and goodness." It is painful to add what truth extorts, that this is really not the sentiment and the language

with which a patriot leaves his Sovereign's councils upon a broad difference of honest opinion, and after being personally ill used by that monarch's favourites, but the tone of feeling, and even the style of diction in which a condemned felon, having sued for mercy, returns thanks when his life has been spared. The pain of defacing any portion of so noble a portrait as Lord Chatham's must not prevent us from marking the traits of a somewhat vulgar, if not a sordid kind, which are to be found on a closer inspection of the original.

Such was the man whom George III. most feared, most hated, and most exerted his kingcraft to disarm; and such, unhappily, was his momentary success in this long-headed enterprise against the liberties of his people and their champions; for Lord Chatham's popularity, struck down by his pension, was afterwards annihilated by his peerage.

LORD NORTH.

The minister whom George III. most loved was, as has been already said, Lord North, and this extraordinary favour lasted until the period of the Coalition. It is no doubt a commonly-received notion, and was at one time an article of belief among the popular party, that Lord Bute continued his secret adviser after the termination of his short administration; but this is wholly without foundation. The King never had any kind of communication with him, directly or indirectly; nor did he ever see him but once, and the history of that occurrence suddenly puts the greater part of the stories to flight which are current upon this subject. His aunt, the Princess Amelia, had some plan of again bringing the two parties together, and on a day when George III. was to pay her a visit at her villa of Gunnersbury near Brentford, she invited Lord Bute, whom she probably had never informed of her foolish intentions. He was walking in the garden when she took her nephew down stairs to view it, saying, there was no one there but an old friend of his, whom he had not seen for some years. He had not time to ask who it might be, when, on entering the garden, he saw his former minister walking up an alley. The King instantly turned back to avoid him, reproved the silly old woman sharply, and declared that, if ever she repeated such experiments, she had seen him for the last time in her house. The assertion that the common reports are utterly void of all foundation, and that no communication whatever of any kind or upon any matter, public or private, ever took place between the parties, we make upon the most positive information, proceeding directly both from George III. and from Lord Bute. But we go farther; the story is contrary to all probability; for that Prince, as well as others of his family, more than suspected the intimacy between his old governor and his royal mother, and, according to

the nature of princes of either sex, he never forgave it. The likelihood is, that this came to his knowledge after the period of his first illness, and the Regency Bill which he, in consequence of that circumstance, proposed to parliament; for it is well known that he then had so much regard for the Dowager Princess, as to turn out George Grenville because he passed her over as Regent. Consequently, the discovery which we are supposing him to have made must have been some time after Lord Bute's ministry closed. Certain it is that the feeling towards him had become, for some reason or other, not neutral, negative, or passive: but such as rules men, and still more princes, when favour is succeeded by dislike; for we may then say what was so wittily observed respecting Louis XV. on a very different occasion—"Il n'y a rien de petit chez les grands." His correspondence with his other ministers, to which we have had access, speaks the same language; a very marked prejudice is constantly betrayed against Scotchmen and Scotch politics.

The origin of Lord North's extraordinary favour was his at once consenting to take the office of prime minister when the Duke of Grafton, in a moment of considerable public difficulty and embarrassment, of what, in those easy days of fair weather, was called danger, suddenly threw up the seals, and retired to his diversions and his mistress at Newmarket. Lord North was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the House of Commons. He had thus already the most arduous by far of the government duties cast upon him; and his submitting to bear also the nominal functions and real patronage and power of First Lord of the Treasury, seemed but a slender effort of courage or self-devotion. As such, however, the King considered it; nor during the disastrous and really difficult times which his own obstinate bigotry and strong tyrannical propensities brought upon the country, did he ever cease to feel and to testify the lively sense he always felt of the obligation under which Lord North had laid him personally, by coming to his assistance upon that emergency. In fact responsibility, which to almost all official personages proves the greatest trial, is the most heavily felt, and the

most willingly shunned, presses with peculiar weight upon the great public functionary, who by law is wholly exempt from it, and in practice never can know it, unless during the interval between one ministry and another. The less he is in general accustomed to this burden, the more hard does he find it to bear when he has no minister to cast it upon. Accordingly kings are peculiarly helpless, extremely anxious, and not a little alarmed, when any event has, as they term it, "left them without a government." The relief is proportionably great which they experience when any one, after such an interregnum in times of difficulty, "comes (as they also term it) to their assistance," and "consents to stand by them." This Lord North did for George III. in 1772; and his conduct never was forgotten by that Prince. Indeed, the gratitude and personal affection is very remarkable which he showed ever after: at least till the fatal Coalition on which so many political reputations were shipwrecked, and so total a loss was made of both court and popular favour; and it forms one of the not very numerous amiable traits in his character. A striking instance has already been given in speaking of this monarch.

It must be acknowledged that he was singularly fortunate in the minister whom he thus obtained, and, indeed, in the change which he made. The Duke of Grafton, though a man endowed with many valuable qualities for his high station, remarkable for a liberality on ecclesiastical matters rare in any rank, and any one thing rather than the character painted by the persevering malice and audacious calumnies of Junius, who made him and the Duke of Bedford, together with Lord Mansfield, the choice objects of his unsparing and systematic abuse, was nevertheless of no great weight in debate, and of habits which the aristocratic life in those days had little fitted to meet the unceasing claims of official duty upon a statesman's time and attention. The industry of professional slanderers, too, being counteracted by no brilliant political achievements, had concurred with the discontents prevailing at home, and dissensions yet more formidably showing themselves in the colonies,

to lower his reputation in the country, and to make the task of government such as he plainly shrank from.

The helm thus abandoned, fell into the hands of Lord North, then in the vigour of his faculties, in no respect disadvantageously known to the country, and an undoubted favourite with the House, which for some time he had led. His success there was very considerable. Few men in any station, have, indeed, left behind them a higher reputation as a debater, and above all, as the representative of the government. We now speak of his fame after his accession to the chief command in the public councils as well as the warfare of parliament, had consolidated his authority, exhibited his debating powers, and multiplied his victories. It was his lot to maintain the conflict in times of unprecedented difficulty, and against antagonists such as no minister ever had to meet, if we except Mr. Addington, who was speedily overthrown in the rencounter. The resistance of our whole American empire had ended in a general rebellion, and all the military prowess failed to quell it, as all the political measures of the government had failed to prevent it, or rather had ripened discontent into revolt. A series of political disappointments first, and then of military disasters, had made our American affairs hopeless, when the war, extended itself to Europe, and our hitherto invincible navy could not prevent the English coasts and even harbours from being insulted, while our West India islands were ravaged, and our trade in those seas was swept away by the enemy's marine. Nor had the nation the accustomed consolation and government the usual topic of defence, that our disasters befel us through the proverbially fickle fortune of war and the chances of the elements. Every one failure could be traced to the perverse course of impolicy and injustice combined, in which the colonial revolt took its rise. The Americans, unprepared for resistance, and unwilling to risk it, had been driven on by the tyrannical bigotry which presided over our councils, and for which the King was really answerable, although by the fictions of the constitution his servants only could be blamed. Add to this, that the opposition was led first by Mr. Burke, and afterwards

by Mr. Fox, both in the prime of their extraordinary faculties, ranking among their zealous adherents such men an Barrè, Dunning, Lee, supported by the whole phalanx of the Whig aristocracy, and backed always by the prodigious weight of Lord Chatham's authority; occasionally by the exertions of his splendid eloquence, burning brighter than ever as it approached the hour of its extinction. The voice of the people, at first raised against the colonies, soon became loud against the government; and each blunder and each disaster made the storm of public indignation rage more and more violently. Even in point of numbers the parliamentary forces were not so unequally matched as we have seen them during subsequent seasons of warlike discomfiture; for while Mr. Pitt has had majorities of three or four to one in his support, under all the failures of his continental projects, Lord North was frequently reduced to fight with majorities so scanty, as rather resembled the more recent balance of parliamentary power, than the ordinary workings of our constitution.

Such was the strife, and in such untoward circumstances, which Lord North had to maintain, with the help only of his attorney and solicitor-general, Thurlow and Wedderburn, to whom was afterwards added Dundas. But a weight far more than sufficient to counterbalance this accession was about the same time flung into the opposite scale, and rendered its preponderance still more decided. Mr. Pitt signalized his entrance into Parliament by the most extraordinary eloquence, at once matured and nearly perfect in its kind, and by lending all its aid and all its ornaments to the opposition. Nothing daunted, the veteran minister persevered in maintaining the conflict, and was only driven from the helm after he had fought triumphantly for six years against the greater part of the Whig chiefs, and desperately for two more against the whole of the body thus powerfully reinforced.

All contemporary reports agree in representing his talents as having shone with a great and a steady lustre during this singularly trying period. Without any pretensions to fill the higher ranks of eloquence, with no

accomplishments of learning beyond the scholarship which a well-educated Englishman gains at Oxford, with political information such as the historical reading of well-informed men could give, he displayed so thorough an acquaintance with official and Parliamentary business as easily supplied all defects in those days of scanty political acquirement, while his clear, excellent sense, which never failed him and constantly gave him the victory over men of more brilliant genius; his natural tact, still further improved by practice and deep knowledge of men; his ready fluency; his cool, determined courage—would altogether have made him a most accomplished debater, even independent of those peculiar qualities in which he, and indeed all his family, excelled most other men—qualities of singular virtue in any station of either house of Parliament, but in him who holds the first place, of most sovereign efficacy in retaining and rallying his followers, and in conciliating the audience at large—a wit that never failed him, and a suavity of temper that could never be ruffled. Combating his powerful adversaries at such a disadvantage as he for the most part was compelled to work up against, from the almost unbroken series of failures which he was called to defend or extenuate, his tactics were greatly admired as well as his gallantry. Nothing perhaps in this way ever showed both skill and boldness more than his unexpectedly granting a motion for inquiring into the State of the Nation, supposed in parliamentary procedure to be a vote of distrust in the Ministry; for when, to a long and powerful speech introducing that proposition, he contented himself with making an able and complete reply, and then suddenly professed his full readiness to meet the question in detail, by going at once into the committee, the enemy were altogether unprepared, and the whole affair evaporated in smoke.

To give examples of his unbroken good-humour, as enviable as it was amiable, and perhaps still more useful than either, would be to relate the history of almost each night's debate during the American war, The rage of party never was carried to greater excess, nor ever more degenerated into mere personal violence. Constant

threats of impeachment, fierce attacks upon himself and all his connexions, mingled execration of his measures and scorn of his capacity, bitter hatred of his person—the elaborate, and dazzling, and learned fancy of Burke, the unburdened license of invective in which the young blood of Fox nightly boiled over, the epigrams of Barrè, the close reasoning and legal subtlety of Dunning, the broad humour and argumentative sarcasm of Lee—were, without intermission, exhausted upon the minister, and seemed to have no effect upon his habitually placid deportment, nor to consume his endless patience, while they weared out his implacable antagonists. By a plain homely answer he could blunt the edge of the fiercest declamation or most refined sarcasm: with his pleasantry, never far-fetched, nor ever overdone, or misplaced, or forced, he could turn away wrath and refresh the jaded listeners, while, by his undisturbed temper, he made them believe he had the advantage, and could turn into a laugh, at the assailants expense, the invective which had been destined to crush himself. On one or two occasions, not many, the correspondence of contemporary writers makes mention of his serenity having been ruffled, as a proof to what excesses of violence the opposition had been carried, but also as an occurrence almost out of the ordinary course of nature. And, truly, of those excesses there needs no other instance be cited than Mr. Fox declaring, with much emphasis, his opinion of the Minister to be such that he should deem it unsafe to be alone with him in a room.

But if it would be endless to recount the triumphs of his temper, it would be equally so and far more difficult to record those of his wit. It appears to have been of a kind peculiarly characteristic and eminently natural; playing easily and without the least effort; perfectly suited to his placid nature, by being what Clarendon says of Charles II., "a pleasant, affable, recommending sort of wit;" wholly unpretending; so exquisitely suited to the occasion that it never failed of effect, yet so readily produced and so entirely unambitious, that although it had occurred to nobody before, every one wondered it had not suggested itself to all. A few only

of his sayings have reached us, and these, as might be expected, are rather things which he had chanced to coat over with some sarcasm or epigram that tended to preserve them; they consequently are far from giving an idea of his habitual pleasantry and the gayety of thought which generally pervaded his speeches. Thus, when a vehement declaimer, calling aloud for his head, turned round and perceived his victim unconsciously indulging in a soft slumber, and, becoming still more exasperated, denounced the Minister as capable of sleeping while he ruined his country—the latter only complained how cruel it was to be denied a solace which other criminals so often enjoyed, that of having a night's rest before their fate. When surprised in a like indulgence during the performance of a very inferior artist, who, however, showed equal indignation at so ill-timed a recreation, he contented himself with observing how hard it was that he should be grudged so very natural a release from considerable suffering; but, as if recollecting himself, added, that it was somewhat unjust in the gentleman to complain of him for taking the remedy which he had himself been considerate enough to administer. The same good-humour and drollery quitted him not when in opposition. Every one has heard of the speech which, if it had failed to injure the objects of its attack, was very effectual in affixing a name upon its honest and much-respected author. On Mr. Martin's proposal to have a starling placed near the chair and taught to repeat the cry of "Infamous coalition!" Lord North coolly suggested that, as long as the worthy member was preserved to them, it would be a needless waste of the public money, since the starling might well perform his office by deputy. That in society such a man must have been the most delightful of companions may well be supposed. In his family, and in all his private intercourse, as in his personal character, he was know to be in every respect amiable; of scrupulous integrity and unsullied honour.

As a statesman, his merits are confessedly far inferior to those which clothed him as a debater and as a man. The American war is the great blot upon his fame; for his share in the coalition was only excep-

tionable on account of the bitterness with which his adversaries had so long pursued him; and if they could submit to the fellowship of one upon whom they had heaped such unmeasured abuse, they seemed to recant, or even to confess that the opinions which they had previously professed of him, they had not really entertained. That ill-fated measure of the Whigs seemed to be rather a tribute of tardy justice to their great adversary, and it was not for him either to reject it or to scrutinize the motives from which it was paid. But the policy towards our colonies, of which he had been the leading advocate in Parliament, and for which he was primarily responsible as minister, can admit of no defence; nor in his position, and upon so momentous a question, is it possible to urge, even in extenuation of his offending, that he was all along aware of the King's egregious folly, which obstinately persisted in a hopeless and ruinous struggle against the liberties of his people. That this, however, was the fact, there exists no kind of doubt; he was long resolved to quit the helm, because George III. insisted on a wrong course being steered—that helm which he ought to have quitted as soon as his mind was made up to differ with the owner of the vessel, unless he were permitted to follow his own course; and he was only kept at his post by constant entreaties, by monthly expostulations, by the most vehement protestations of the misguided Prince against a proceeding which must leave him helpless in the hands of his implacable enemies, and even by promises always renewed to let him go would he but remain for a few weeks, until some other arrangement could be made. It is fit that this certain and important fact should be stated; and we have before us the proofs of it under the hand of the Royal Suitor to his reluctant servant's grace and favour, whose apparently fixed purpose of retirement, he uses all these expedients to defeat, or at least to obstruct and retard, if he cannot frustrate. This importunity, working upon the feelings of a well-natured person like Lord North, might easily be expected to produce its intended effect; and the unavoidable difficulty of retreating from a post

which, while he held it, had become one of peril as well as embarrassment, doubtless increased the difficulty of abandoning it while the danger lasted.

But although we may thus explain, we are not the better enabled to excuse the minister's conduct. When he found that he could no longer approve the policy which he was required to pursue, and of course to defend, he was bound to quit the councils of his obstinate and unreasonable sovereign. Nor can there be a worse service either to the Prince or his people, than enabling a Monarch to rule in his own person, dictating the commands of his own violence or caprice, through servants who disapprove of his measures, and yet suffer themselves to be made instruments for carrying them into execution. A bad King can desire nothing more than to be served by such persons whose opinions he will as much disregard as their inclinations, but whom he will always find his tools in doing the work of mischief, because they become the more at the Monarch's mercy in proportion as they have surrendered their principles and their will to his. Far, then, very far from vindicating the conduct of Lord North in this essential point, we hesitate not to affirm that the discrepancy between his sentiments and his measures is not even any extenuation of the disastrous policy which gave us, for the fruits of a long and disastrous war, the dismemberment of the empire. In truth, what otherwise might have been regarded as an error of judgment, became an offence, only palliated by considering those kindly feelings of a personal kind which governed him, but which every statesman, indeed every one who acts in any capacity as trustee for others, is imperatively called upon to disregard.

While, however, truth requires this statement, justice equally demands that, in thus denouncing his offence, we should mark how very far it is from being a solitary case of political misconduct. Upon how many other great occasions have other ministers sacrificed their principles, not to the good-natured wish that the King might not be disturbed, but to the more sordid appre-

hension that their own government might be broken up, and their adversaries displace them, if they manfully acted up to their well-known and oftentimes recorded opinions? How many of those who, but for this unwelcome retrospect into their own lives, which we are thus forcing upon them, would be the very first to pronounce a pharisaical condemnation on Lord North, have adopted the views of their opponents, rather than yield them up their places by courageously and honestly pursuing the course prescribed by their own? Let us be just to both parties: but first to the conductor of the American war, by calling to mind the similar delinquency of some who have succeeded to his power, with capacity of a higher order than his, and of some who resembled him only in their elevation to high office, without his talents to sustain it or to adorn. The subject, too, has a deeper and more general interest than merely that of dispensing justice among individuals; it concerns the very worst offence of which a minister can be guilty—the abandonment of his own principles for place, and counselling his Sovereign and his country, not according to his conscience, but according to what, being most palatable to them, is most beneficial to the man himself.

Mr. Pitt, joining the war party in 1793, the most striking and the most fatal instance of this offence, is the one which at once presents itself; because of all Lord North's adversaries there was none who pursued him with such unrelenting rancour, to the pitch of peremptorily refusing all negotiations with the Fox party, unless their new ally should be expelled, when he, with a magnanimity rare indeed among statesmen, instantly removed the obstacle to his bitter adversary's elevation, by withdrawing all claims to a share of power. No one more clearly than Mr. Pitt saw the ruinous consequences of the contest into which his new associates, the deserters from the Whig standard, were drawing or were driving him; none so clearly perceived or so highly valued the blessings of peace, as the finance minister, who had but the year before accompanied his reduction of the whole national establishment with a picture of our future pros-

perity almost too glowing even for his great eloquence to attempt. Accordingly it is well known, nor is it ever contradicted by his few surviving friends, that his thoughts were all turned to peace. But the voice of the court was for war; the aristocracy was for war; the country was not disinclined towards war, being just in that state of excitable (though as yet not excited) feeling which it depended upon the government, that is, upon Mr. Pitt, either to calm down into a sufferance of peace, or rouse into a vehement desire of hostilities. In these circumstances, the able tactician whose genius was confined to parliamentary operations, at once perceived that war must place him at the head of all the power in the state, and by uniting with him the more aristocratic portion of the Whigs, cripple his adversaries irreparably; and he preferred flinging his country into a contest which he and his great antagonist by uniting their forces must have prevented; but then he must also have shared with Mr. Fox the power which he was determined to enjoy alone and supreme. This was a far worse offence than Lord North's; although the country, or at least the patrician party shared with the crown the prejudices to which Mr. Pitt surrendered his own judgment, and the power to reward his welcome conversion. The youngest man living will not survive the fatal effects of this flagrant political crime.

The abandonment of the Catholic question by the same minister when he returned to power in 1804, and the similar sacrifice which the Whigs made at his death to the bigotry of George III., are often cited as examples of the same delinquency. But neither the one nor the other of these passages presents anything like the same aspect with the darker scene of place-loving propensities which we have just been surveying. The marked difference is the state of the war; the great desire which the Pitt party had of conducting hostilities with vigour, and which the Fox party had of bringing them to a close. The more recent history, however, of the same question affords instances more parallel to those of the American and the French wars. When peace was restored, and when even the obstacle to the

emancipation presented by George III.'s obstinate bigotry was removed, they who had so long talked the uncouth language, so strange to the constitution of a free country, of yielding to "unhappy prejudices in a high quarter, impossible to be removed," had now no longer any pretext for uttering such sounds as those. The Regent, afterwards the King, had no prejudices which any man, be his nature ever so sensitive, was called on to respect; for he had, up to the illness of his father, been a warm friend of the Catholics. Yet, no sooner did he declare against his former principles, than Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning also declared that his conscience (the scrupulous conscience of George IV.!) must not be forced, and one administration was formed after another upon the principle of abandoning all principle in order to follow the interests of the parties, and of leaving the domestic peace of the country by common consent out of view. The present state of Ireland, and indeed to a certain degree the unworthy course pursued by their successors on Irish affairs, is the fruit, and the natural fruit, of this wholly unprincipled system.

The subject of Parliamentary Reform affords other illustrations of a like kind. To alter the constitution of parliament, as one party termed it, to restore it, as another said, but to change its actual structure, as all admitted, might be right or it might be wrong; might be necessary for the peace of the country, or might be the beginning of inextricable confusion; but at any rate, statesmen were called upon to decide so grave a question upon its own merits—a question by far the most momentous of any that statesmen were in this world ever summoned to discuss in the peaceful deliberations of council, or senators to decide by the weapons of argument alone—a question which, in any other age, perhaps in any other country, must have been determined, not by deliberations of politicians or arguments of orators, but by the swords and the spears of armed combatants. Yet this question has more than once, and by more than one party, been made the subject of compromise, at one time taken up, at another laid

down, as suited the convenience rather than the duty of statesmen. Of a certainty, those men have no right to blame Lord North for remaining in office, though disapproving the American war, rather than break up the government and open the doors of Downing street to the opposition. In one respect, indeed, Lord North has been by far outdone by them. No exigency of party affairs ever drove him back to the side of the American controversy which he had escaped. But the "Reformers of the Eleventh Hour," having made all the use of their new creed which they well could, took the opportunity of the new reign to cast it off, and, fancying they could now do without it, returned into the bosom of their own church, becoming once more faithful supporters of things as they are, and sworn enemies of reform.

A new and perhaps unexpected vindication of Lord North has been recently presented by the Canadian policy of liberal governments, as far as mistakes by inferior artist can extenuate the failings of their more eminent predecessors. When the senseless folly was stated of clinging by colonies wholly useless and merely expensive, which all admit must sooner or later assert their independence and be severed from the mother-country, none of all this was denied, nor indeed could it; but the answer was, that no government whatever could give up any part of its dominions without being compelled by force, and that history afforded no example of such a surrender without an obstinate struggle. What more did Lord North, and the other authors of the disgraceful contest with America, than act upon this bad principle?

But a general disposition exists in the present day to adopt a similar course to the one which we have been reprobating in him, and that upon questions of the highest importance. It seems to be demanded by one part of the community, and almost conceded by some portion of our rulers in our days, that it is the duty of statesmen when in office to abdicate the functions of Government. We allude to the unworthy, the preposterous, the shameful, the utterly disgraceful doc-

trine of what are called "*open questions.*" Its infamy and its audacity has surely no parallel. Enough was it that the Catholic Emancipation should have been taken up in this fashion, from a supposed necessity, and under the pressure of fancied, nay, factitious difficulties. No one till now ever had the assurance to put forward, as a general principle, so profligate a rule of conduct; amounting indeed to this, that when any set of politicians find their avowed and recorded opinions inconsistent with the holding by office, they may lay them aside, and abdicate the duty of Government while they retain its emoluments and its powers. Mark well, too, that this is not done upon some trivial question, which all men who would act together in one body for the attainment of great and useful objects, may and oftentimes must waive, or settle by mutual concessions—nothing of the kind; it is upon the greatest and most useful of all objects, that the abdication is demanded, and is supposed to be made. Whether Reform shall be final or progressive—whether the Elective Franchise shall be extended or not—whether voting shall be by Ballot or open—whether the Corn Laws shall be repealed or not—such are the points upon which the ministers of the Crown are expected to have exactly no opinion; alone of the whole community to stand mute and inactive, neither thinking, neither stirring,—and to do just precisely neither more or less than—nothing. It is surely unnecessary to say more. "*The word abdicate,*" on which men debated so long, one hundred and fifty years ago, is the only word in the dictionary which can suit the case. Can any one thing be more clear than this, that there are questions upon which it is wholly impossible that a Government should not have some opinion, and equally necessary that, in order to deserve the name of a Government, its members should agree? Why are one set of men in office rather than another, but because they agree among themselves, and differ with their adversaries upon such great questions as these. The code of political morality recognises the *idem sentire de republica* as a legitimate bond of virtuous union among honest men; the

idem velle atque idem nolle, is also a well known principle of action; but among the associates of Cataline, and by the confession of their profligate leader. Can it be doubted for a moment of time, that when a government has said, "We cannot agree on these the only important points of practical policy"—the time is come for so reconstructing and changing it, as that an agreement imperiously demanded by the best interests of the state may be secured? They are questions upon which an opinion must be formed by every man, be he statesman or individual, ruler or subject. Each of the great measures in question is either expedient or it is hurtful. The people have an indisputable right to the help of the Government in furthering it if beneficial, in resisting it if pernicious; and to proclaim that, on these subjects, the governors of the country alone must stand neuter, and leave the questions to their fate, is merely to say that, whensoever it is most necessary to have a Government, we have no government at all; and why? Because they in whose hands the administration of affairs is vested, are resolved rather to keep their places than to do their duty.

A similar view is sometimes put forward and even acted upon, but of so vulgar, so incomparably base a kind, that we hardly know if we should deign to mention it. The partisans of a ministry are wont to say for their patrons, that, unless the country call for certain measures, it shall not have them. What! Is this the duty of rulers? Are men in such stations to give all that may be asked, and only to give because of the asking, without regarding whether it be a boon or a bane? Is the motto of them that hold the citadel to be "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you?"—Assuredly such men as these do not rise even to the mean rank of those disgraced spirits elsewhere, who while in life

——visser senza infamia e senza lodo;

but of them we may at least say as of these,

Non ragionam di lor ma guarda e passa.*

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* DANTE, Inf.

While Lord North led the House of Commons, he had extremely little help from any merely political men of his party. No ministers joined him in defending the measures of his Government. His reliance was upon professional supporters; and Gibbon has described him as slumbering between the great legal Pillars of his administration, his Attorney and Solicitor-General, who indeed composed his whole strength, until Mr. Dundas, also a professional supporter, being Lord Advocate of Scotland, became a new and very valuable accession to his forces.

LORD LOUGHBOROUGH.

Mr. Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough and Earl of Rosslyn, was one of the few eminent lawyers who have shone at the least as much in political affairs as in Westminister Hall. Of those English barristers to whom this remark is applicable, Mr. Perceval was perhaps the most considerable; of men bred at the Scotch bar, and who were promoted in England, Lord Melville: Mr. Wedderburn, in some sort, partook of both kinds, having been originally an advocate in Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself by his eloquence and by the fierceness of his invective, which being directed against a leading member of the bar, ended in a quarrel with the court, led to his removing from the provincial theatre, and ultimately raised him to the English bench. He was a person of great powers, cultivated with much care, and chiefly directed towards public speaking. Far from being a profound lawyer, he was versed in as much professional learning on ordinary subjects as sufficed for the common occasions of *Nisi Prius*. On peerage law, he is believed to have had more knowledge, and the whole subject lies within a very narrow compass. He affected great acquaintance with constitutional learning; but on this doubts were entertained, augmented, certainly, by the unscrupulous manner in which his opinions were at the service of the political parties he successively belonged to. But his strength lay in dealing with facts; and here all his contemporaries represent his powers to have been unrivalled. It was probably this genius for narrative, for arguing upon probabilities, for marshalling and for sifting evidence, that shone so brilliantly in his great speech at the bar of the House of Lords upon the celebrated Douglas cause, and which no less a judge than Mr. Fox pronounced to be the very finest he ever heard on any subject. It must, however, be remarked in abate-

ment of this high panegyric, that the faculty of statement and of reasoning without the excitement of a contentious debate, being very little possessed by that great man himself, a happy display of it, not so unusual in professional men, might produce a greater impression upon him than was proportioned to its true value and real weight. That it was a prodigious exhibition may nevertheless be admitted to the united testimony of all who recollect it, and who have lived in our own times. That Lord Loughborough never forgot the Douglas cause itself, as he was said to have forgotten so many merely legal arguments in which he from time to time had been engaged, appears from one of his judgments in Chancery, where he imported into a case before him facts not belonging to it, but recollected by him as having been proved in the case of Douglas.

His manner in earlier life was remarked as excellent; and though it probably partook even then of that over-precision which, in his later years, sometimes bordered upon the ridiculous, it must certainly have been above the common order of forensic delivery to earn the reputation which has remained of it. That he made it an object of his special care is certain. He is supposed to have studied under a player; and he certainly spared no pains to eradicate his northern accent, besides being exceedingly careful to avoid provincial solecisms. His efforts were eminently successful in both these particulars; but the force of second nature, habit, will yield to that Nature herself, who is apt to overcome in the end all violence that cultivation may do her. His Scotticisms and his vernacular tones returned as his vigour was impaired in the decline of life; showing that it was all the while an effort which could not continue when the attention was relaxed and its powers enfeebled.

Upon the removal of Sir Fletcher Norton he joined the Northern Circuit, having then the rank of King's Council. As this was contrary to all the rules of the profession, and was, indeed, deemed to be a discreditable proceeding as well as a breach of discipline, even independent of other peculiarities attending the operation,*

* He came there with the same clerk whom Sir F. Norton had before in his service.

an immediate resolution was adopted by the Bar to refuse holding briefs with the new-comer; a resolution quite fatal to him, had not Mr. Wallace, a man of undoubted learning and ability, been tempted to break it, and thereby at once to benefit himself and nearly destroy the combination. He thus secured, beside the immediate advantage of professional advancement, the patronage of his leader, who in a few years became Solicitor-General, and afterwards Attorney, under Lord North's administration, drawing Mr. Wallace upwards in his train. He practised in the Court of Chancery; but in those days the line had not been drawn which now, so hurtfully for the Equity practitioner, separates the two sides of Westminster Hall; and Chancery leaders frequented the different circuits almost equally with practitioners in the courts of Common Law.

When he entered the House of Commons he became, in a very short time, one of the two main supports of its ministerial leader: the other was Lord Thurlow: and while they remained there to defend him, Lord North might well, as Gibbon has described the "Palinurus of the state," indulge in slumbers with his Attorney and Solicitor-General on either hand remaining at their posts to watch out the long debate. No minister before or since the time of Mr. Addington ever depended so much upon the services of his professional supporters. Indeed, they and Mr. Dundas, alone, appear to have shared with him the whole weight of an attack conducted by the powers of an opposition which Burke and Fox led, and aggravated by the uninterrupted series of disasters which, during the whole American contest, attended the councils of the King and his servants.

Of the debates in those days, such scanty remains are preserved, that no one could discover from them the qualities, or even the classes of the orators who bore a part in them. The critic cannot from such fragments divine the species and supply the lost parts, as the comparative anatomist can, by the inspection of a few bones in the fossil strata of the globe. Until, therefore, Lord Loughborough came to the House of Lords, indeed until the Regency question occupied that assembly in 1788

and 1789, we were left without the means of assigning his place as a debater. Of his forensic powers we have better opportunities to judge. Several of his arguments are preserved, particularly in the Duchess of Kingston's case, and in one or two causes of celebrity heard before him in the Common Pleas, from which we can form an idea, and it is a very exalted one, of his clearness and neatness of statement, the point and precision of his language, and the force and even fire with which he pressed his argument or bore down upon an adverse combatant. The effect of his eloquence upon a very favourable audience certainly, and in a season of great public violence and delusion, for it was against the Americans, and before the Privy Council at the commencement of the revolt, are well known. Mr. Fox alluded to it in warning the Commons against being led away by such eloquence as Mr. Pitt had just astonished them with, at the renewal of the war in 1803; reminding them how all men "tossed up their hats and clapped their hands in boundless delight" at Mr. Wedderburn's Privy Council speech, without reckoning the cost it was to entail upon them. Of this famous display nothing remains but a small portion of his invective against Franklin, which, being couched in epigram, and conveyed by classical allusion, has been preserved, as almost always happens to whatever is thus sheathed. It refers to some letters of a colonial governor, which, it was alleged, had come unfairly into Franklin's hands, and been improperly used by him; and the Solicitor-General's classical wit was displayed in jesting upon that illustrious person's literary character, and calling him a man of three letters, the old Roman joke for a thief! Pity that so sorry a sample of so celebrated an orator should be all that has reached the present time to justify the account given by Mr. Fox of the effects which its delivery produced! We are thus reminded of Swift's allusion to some statue of Cato, of which nothing remained save the middle region.

That the speech and the whole scene was not without its effect upon him who was the principal object of attack, appears sufficiently certain; for though, at the

moment, a magnanimous and, indeed, somewhat overdone, expression of contempt for the speaker is reported to have escaped him in answer to one who hoped, rather clumsily, that he did not feel hurt, "I should think myself meaner than I have been described, if anything coming from such a quarter could vex me;" yet it is well known that, when the ambassadors were met to sign the peace of Versailles, by which the independence of America was acknowledged, Franklin retired, in order to change his dress and affix his name to the treaty in those very garments which he wore when attending the Privy Council, and which he had kept by him for the purpose during many years, a little inconsistently, it must be confessed, with the language of contemptuous indifference used by him at the moment.

When he was raised to the Bench in 1780, and the Special Commission was issued for trying the rioters, he presided, and delivered a charge to the Grand Jury, the subject at the time of much animadversion for its matter, and of boundless panegyric for its execution. It was published and widely circulated under the authority of the learned Judge himself; and we have thus in the first place the means of determining how far the contemporary opinions upon that production itself were well founded, and next how far the admiration excited by the other efforts of the same artist was justly bestowed. Whoever now reads this celebrated charge, will confess that the blame and the praise allotted to it were alike ex[illegible]gerated. Far from laying down bad law and pro[illegible]ting from the Bench dangerous doctrines respect[illegible]eason, the whole legal portion of it consists in a [illegible]ation from Judge Foster's book, and a statement in [illegible]nich every lawyer must concur, that the Riot Act never intended to prevent the magistrate from quelling a riot during the hour after proclamation. Then the whole merit of the address in point of execution consists in the luminous, concise, and occasionally impressive sketch of the late riotous proceedings which had given rise to the trials. That this narrative, delivered in a clear and melodious voice, loud without being harsh, recently after the event, and while men's minds were

filled with the alarm of their late escape, and with indignation at the cause of their fears, should make a deep impression, and pass current at a standard of eloquence far above the true one, may well be imagined. But so much the more reprehensible (and here lies the true ground of blame) was the conduct of the Judge who could at such a moment take the pains manifested throughout this charge to excite, or rather to keep alive and glowing, those feelings which the due administration of justice required him rather sedulously to allay. Within a short month after the riots themselves six and forty persons were put upon their trial for that offence; and nearly the whole of the Chief Justice's address consisted of a solemn and stately lecture upon the enormity of the offence, and a denial of whatever could be alleged in extenuation of the offender's conduct. It resembled far more the speech of an advocate for the prosecution, than the charge of a Judge to the Grand Jury. Again, when we find a composition which all men had united to praise as a finished specimen of oratory, falling to a rather ordinary level, there is some difficulty in avoiding the inference that an abatement should also be made from the great eulogies bestowed upon its author's other speeches, which have not reached us; and we can hardly be without suspicion that much of their success may have been owing to the power of a fine delivery, and a clear voice in setting off inferior matter; to which may be added the never-failing effect of correct composition, if employed either at the bar or in Parliament, where a more slovenly diction is so much more frequent, even with the best speakers.

That he was a thoroughly devoted party man all his life, can indeed no more be questioned than that he owed to the manœuvres of faction much of his success. He did not cease to feel the force of party attachment when he ascended the Bench; and there can be no doubt that his object at all times, even while he sat in the Common Pleas, was to gain that great prize of the profession which he at length reduced into possession. We shall in vain look for any steady adherence to one code of political principles, any consistent pursuit of one undeviating line of

conduct, in his brilliant and uniformly successful career. He entered parliament in uncompromising opposition to Lord North's cabinet, and for some years distinguished himself among their most fierce assailants, at a time when no great errors had been committed or any crimes against public liberty or the peace of the world could be laid to their charge. On the eve of the American war, he joined them when their measures were becoming daily more indefensible; and it is known that, like many others in similar circumstances, he appeared at first to have lost the power of utterance, so astonished and overcome was he with the plunge which he had made after preferment.* But he soon recovered his faculties, and continued in office the constant and unflinching supporter of all the measures by which his former adversaries converted discontent into disaffection, and out of disaffection raised up revolt; nor did he quit them when they had severed the empire in twain. Removed from the strife of the senate and forum, on the bench he continued their partisan, when they joined in a coalition with their ambitious and unscrupulous enemies. For many years of Mr. Pitt's administration he was the real if not the avowed leader of the Foxite opposition in the House of Lords, as well as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Westminster Hall. He had under the Coalition enjoyed a foretaste of that great banquet of dignity and patronage, emolument and power, on which he had so immovably fixed his longsighted and penetrating eye; having been Chief Commissioner of the Great Seal during the short life of that justly unpopular administration. This scanty repast but whetted his appetite the more; and among the more bold and unhesitating of the Pince's advisers upon the question of the Regency, the Chief Justice was to be found the boldest and most unflinching.

No one can, upon a calm review of that famous controversy, entertain any doubt that the strict letter of the constitution prescribed one course, while the mani-

* Alluding to this passage of his life, Junius, in his XLIVth letter, says, "We have seen him in the House of Commons overwhelmed with confusion, and almost bereft of his faculties."

fest consideration of expediency prescribed another. Nothing can be more contrary to the whole frame of a monarchy than allowing the very fundamental principle, that of hereditary descent, for which and its benefits so many strange and even pernicious anomalies are overlooked, such constant risks encountered, and such serious practical inconveniences borne with, to be broken in upon when the sovereign is disabled, whether by infancy, or by old age, or by disease, and instead of following the plain course of the succession, to call in the elective voice of the country by an act that resolves the government into its first principles. To make this appeal and not merely to elect a regent but to limit his powers, is in other words to frame a new constitution for the state, which shall last during the monarch's incapacity, and which, if it be fit for the purposes of government, ought assuredly not to be replaced by the old one, when he recovers or attains his perfect powers of action. The phantom of a commission issued by an incapable king to confer upon what the two other branches of the legislature had proposed, the outward semblance of a statute passed by all the three, was an outrage upon all constitutional principle, and, indeed, upon the common sense of mankind, yet more extravagant than the elective nature of the whole process. Nevertheless, there were reasons of a practical description which overbore these obvious considerations, and reconciled men's minds to such an anomalous proceeding. It seemed necessary to provide for the safe custody of the king's person; and for such a sure restoration of his powers as should instantly replace the sceptre in his hand the very moment that his capacity to hold it should return. His Vicegerent must plainly have no control over this operation, neither over the Royal patient's custody, nor over the resumption of his office, and the termination of his own. But it would not have been very easy to cut off all interference on the Regent's part in this most delicate matter, had he been invested with the full powers of the Crown. So, in like manner, the object being to preserve things as nearly

as possible in their present state, if those full powers had been exercised uncontrolled, changes of a nature quite irreversible might have been effected while the Monarch's faculties were asleep; and not only he would have awakened to a new order of things, but the affairs of the country would have been administered under that novel dispensation by one irreconcilably hostile to it, while its author, appointed in the course of nature once more to rule as his successor, would have been living and enjoying all the influence acquired by his accidental, anticipated, and temporary reign. These considerations, and the great unpopularity of the Heir-apparent, and his political associates, the coalition party, enabled Mr. Pitt to carry his proposition of a regency with restricted powers established by a bill to which the two remaining branches alone of the crippled Parliament had assented, instead of their addressing the Heir-apparent, declaring the temporary vacancy of the throne, and desiring him temporarily to fill it. The sudden recovery of the King prevented the experiment from being then fully tried: but it was repeated after great opposition and much discussion in 1810. The two precedents thus made, have now settled the constitutional law and practice in this important particular.

The Parliament of Ireland, it is to be remarked, did not, in the earlier case, pursue the same course with that of Great Britain. Our fellow citizens, although dwelling farther from the rising sun, are more devotedly given to its worship than ourselves. They could see nothing of experience or discretion sufficient to restrain their zeal; and they at once addressed the Prince of Wales to take upon him the Government without any restriction whatever, leaving it to His Royal Highness to make what provision he might deem most convenient for his own dethronement and his father's restoration should he recover. It is the same country which, having some thirty years later been ill-used by the same individual, testified their sense of this treatment by overt acts of idolatry when he went among them at the most justly unpopular period of his life, and even began a subscrip-

tion for building him a palace, of which however not a farthing was ever paid.*

In the consultations, and in the intrigues to which this crisis gave rise, Lord Loughborough bore a forward part. That he should have agreed with the rest of the party in the constitutional view which they took of the question, could excite no surprise, nor give rise to any comment. But it is well known that his views were of a more practical nature than any which appeared in the debate. Bold, determined, unscrupulous, he recommended in council a course which nothing but the courage derived from desperation could have made any English statesmen in the eighteenth century take into their serious consideration, and which, if it had been pursued, would have left the odium attached to the Coalition in the shade, and made the people of this country repent them of not having detested the parties to it yet more bitterly and more universally. It was the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice, that the Prince of Wales should not have waited for even an address of the two houses; but, considering them as nonentities while the throne was empty, should at once have proceeded to restore, as it was delicately and daintily termed, the executive branch of the constitution; in other words, proclaim himself regent, and issue his orders to the troops and the magistrates as if his father were naturally dead, and he had succeeded, in the course of nature, to the vacant crown. There is no reason to believe that this scheme of Lord Loughborough was adopted by the

* General censures of a whole nation are generally foolish, and are really of no avail. But if the Irish people would avoid the ill opinion under which they labour among all men of reflection, and raise themselves to the rank of a nation fit for self-government, they must begin to show that they can think for themselves, and not follow blindfolded every delusion, or suffer to be practised upon them every gross and shameless fraud, and give the countenance of their acquiescence to every avowal of profligate principles which can be made before them. At present they are only known to the rest of their fellow-citizens for a mass of people never consulted, though absolutely ruled by the priests and the patriots who use them as blind, unreflecting tools. Yet the genius and the worth of the nation are denied by none. May they soon be really emancipated, and learn to think and act for themselves!

chiefs of the party, nor, indeed, is there any evidence that it was communicated to them. That it was an advice hinted to the Heir-apparent, or at least a subject discussed with him, and of which memoranda remain in the Chief Justice's handwriting, is very confidently affirmed from ocular inspection. Whether or not a very popular prince might with safety have ventured upon such an experiment, is a question so wide of the actual case, that no time needs be wasted upon its solution. That the individual to whom this perilous advice was tendered, could not have done so without a civil war, appears sufficiently evident. Indeed, the marriage *de facto*, legal or illegal, which he had contracted with a Catholic lady, and of which the circumstances were generally known, would alone have furnished Mr. Pitt with a sufficient objection to his title; and the country would have owed to one of her reverend judges the blessings of a disputed succession and intestine tumults, such as she had not experienced since the days of the two roses. There can be little doubt, whether we consider the character of the man, or his subsequent conduct towards George III. on the Catholic question, and his advice respecting the Coronation oath, that part of Lord Loughborough's design was to obtain an undivided control over the Prince, who should then have flung himself into his hands by adopting his extreme opinions, and acting upon such hazardous counsels.

The discomfiture of the opposition party by the king's recovery, and by the great accession to his personal popularity which his illness had occasioned, left Lord Loughborough no prospect of power for some years. The French Revolution was then approaching, and the Whigs suffered the almost irreparable blow of the Portland party separating themselves upon the great questions connected with that event. He was one of the seceders; nor in taking this step did he quit his allies of the North school. The Great Seal, now within his reach by Lord Thurlow's quarrel with Mr. Pitt, may have operated as an additional temptation to close his ears against the evils of the war into which this junction plunged the country; but one who had defended

the government steadily through all the calamities of the American contest, had not much to learn of fortitude in seasons of difficulty, or of patience under public misfortune. He held the Great Seal for seven or eight years, and was at the head of the law during the period of attempted proscription and actual persecution of the Reformers, the professors of those opinions carried to the extreme, which the Whigs, his late allies, professed in more moderation and with a larger admixture of aristocratic prejudices. But of him it cannot be said, as of Mr. Pitt, that he had ever professed reform principles. On the contrary, the North party at all times differed upon that question with their Foxite coadjutors, who, indeed, differed sufficiently upon it among themselves.

The character of Lord Loughborough stood far less high as a judge, than as either a debater in parliament, or an advocate at the bar. His decisions evince little of the learning of his profession; and do not even show a very legal structure of the understanding. They are frequently remarkable enough for clear and even felicitous statement; but in close argument, as in profound knowledge, they are evidently deficient. Some of his judgments in the Common Pleas were more distinguished by ability, and more admired at the time, than any which he pronounced in the court where the greater part of his life had been passed. But he was not unpopular at the head of the profession. His manners were courteous and even noble; his liberality was great. Wholly above any sordid feelings of avarice or parsimony, and only valuing his high station for the powers which it conferred, and the dignity with which it was compassed round about, he maintained its state with a munificent expenditure, and amassed no money for his heirs. He was moreover endued with personal qualities which a generous profession is apt to esteem highly. Reasonably accomplished as a scholar, cultivating all his life the society of literary men, determined and unhesitating in his conduct, polite in his demeanour, elegant, dignified in his habits, equal in his favour to all practitioners, unawed by their talents as uninfluenced by

any partialities, and resolute in maintaining his own and his profession's independence of any ministerial authority —those who have succeeded him never advanced greater claims to the personal confidence or respect of the Bar; and his known deficiencies in much higher qualifications were overlooked by men who felt somewhat vain of being ruled or being represented by such a chief. In this exalted station he remained during the whole eventful years that followed the breaking out of the French war, and until the retirement of those who had made it, a retirement probably occasioned by the necessity of restoring peace, but usually ascribed to the controversy on the Catholic question, its pretext and occasion, rather than its cause.

The fancy respecting the coronation oath which so entirely obtained possession of George III.'s mind and actuated his conduct during the whole discussion of Irish affairs, is now generally believed to have been impressed upon it by Lord Loughborough, and probably was devised by his subtle mind, as it was used by his intriguing spirit, for the purpose of influencing the king. But if this was the object of the notable device, never did intriguer more signally fail in his scheme. The cabinet to which he belonged was broken up; a still more crafty successor obtained both the place he had just quitted in the king's service, and the place he had hoped to fill in the king's favour; he was made an earl; he was laid on the shelf; and, as his last move, he retired to a villa remarkable for its want of all beauty and all comforts, but recommended by its near neighbourhood to Windsor Castle, where the former Chancellor was seen dancing a ridiculous attendance upon royalty, unnoticed by the object of his suit, and marked only by the jeering and motley crowd that frequented the terrace. For three years he lived in this state of public neglect, without the virtue to employ his remaining faculties in his country's service by parliamentary attendance, or the manliness to use them for his own protection and aggrandisement. When he died, after a few hours' illness, the intelligence was brought to the king, who, with a circumspection abundantly characteristic, asked the bearer of it, if he

was quite sure of the fact, as Lord Rosslyn had not been ailing before, and, upon being assured that a sudden attack of gout in the stomach had really ended the days of his late servant and once assiduous courtier, his majesty was graciously pleased to exclaim—"Then he has not left a worse man behind him."*

It is the imperative duty of the historian to dwell upon the fate, while he discloses with impartial fulness, and marks with just reprobation the acts of such men; to the end that their great success, as it is called, may not mislead others, and conceal behind the glitter of worldly prosperity, the baser material with which the structure of their fortune is built up. This wholesome lesson, and indeed needful warning, is above all required when we are called upon to contemplate a professional and political life so eminently prosperous as the one which we have been contemplating, which rolled on in an uninterrupted tide of worldly gain and worldly honours, but was advanced only by shining and superficial talents, supported by no fixed principles, illustrated by no sacrifices to public virtue, embellished by no feats of patriotism, nor made memorable by any monuments of national utility; and which being at length closed in the disappointment of mean, unworthy desires, ended amidst universal neglect, and left behind it no claim to the respect or the gratitude of mankind, though it may have excited the admiration or envy of the contemporary vulgar.

* The liberty has been taken to translate the expressive though homely English of royalty, into a phrase more decorous and less unfeeling upon such an occasion.

LORD THURLOW.

The other helpmate upon whom Gibbon paints the pilot of the state as reposing, was as different a person from Lord Loughborough in all respects as can well be imagined. We refer of course to Mr. Thurlow, who filled the office of Attorney-general until the year 1778, when he took the Great Seal. The remains that have reached us of his exhibitions as a speaker, whether at the bar, in parliament, or on the bench, are more scanty still than those of his colleagues; for, while he sat on the bench, the reports in Chancery were on the meagre and jejune footing of the older books; and it is only over a year or two of his presiding in the Court, that Mr. Vesey, junior's, full and authentic reports extend. There seems, however, from all accounts, to have been much less lost of Lord Thurlow, than there would have been of subsequent judges, had the old-fashioned summaries only of equity proceedings been preserved; for his way was to decide, not to reason; and, in court as well as in parliament, no man ever performed the office, whether of judging or debating, with a smaller expenditure of argument.

This practice, if it saves the time of the public, gives but little satisfaction to the suitor. The judges who pursue it forget that, to satisfy the parties, or at least to give them such grounds as ought to satisfy reasonable men, is in importance only next to giving them a right judgment. Almost as important is it to satisfy the profession and the country, which awaits to gather the law, the rule of their conduct in advising or in acting, from the lips of the judge. Nor is it immaterial to the interest even of the party who gains, that the grounds should be made known of his success, especially in courts from which there lies an appeal to a higher tribunal. The consequence of Sir John Leach deciding generally with few or no reasons assigned was that appeals were mul-

tiplied; the successful party had only obtained half a victory; and it became a remark frequent in the mouths of successive chancellors, that causes were *decided* below, but *heard* before them. It is an unaccountable mistake into which some fall, when they fancy that the more weight is attached to such mere sentences, because prefaced by no reasons; as if the judge were to declare the law infallible, like an oracle, or omnipotent like a lawgiver, and keep to himself all knowledge of the route by which he had arrived at his conclusion. The very reverse is true. With an enlightened bar and an intelligent people, the mere authority of the bench will cease to have any weight at all, if it be unaccompanied with argument and explanation. But were it otherwise, the reason would fail, and signally fail; for the only increase of weight derived from the practice would be that to which the judgment had no claim, namely, the outward semblance to the ignorant multitude of a determination more clear and positive than really existed. Add to all this, that no security whatever can be afforded for the mind of the judge having been directed to the different parts of each case, and his attention having been held awake to the whole of the discussions at the bar, still less in equity proceedings of his having read the affidavits and other documentary evidence, unless he states explicitly the view which he takes of the various matters, whether of law or of fact, that have been brought before him. With the exception of Sir John Leach, Lord Thurlow is the last judge who adopted the very bad practice of unreasoned decisions. But his habit of cavilling at the reasons of the common law courts, when a case was sent to them for an opinion, a habit largely followed by Lord Eldon, extended to those courts, in a remarkable and very hurtful manner, Lord Thurlow's own practice: for the temper of those learned individuals became ruffled; and, impatient of criticism upon their reasonings, instead of rather courting a discussion of them, they adopted the evil method of returning their answers or certificates without any reasons at all—a conduct which nothing but the respect due to the bench could hinder men from terming childish in the extreme.

This custom having been much censured by succeeding chancellors, and the House of Lords itself having of late years departed altogether from the old rule of only assigning reasons where a judgment or decree is to be reversed or varied upon appeal, it is to be hoped that the common law judges will once more deign to let the profession know the grounds of their judgments upon the highly important cases sent from Chancery, as they do without the least fear of cavil or criticism upon any trifling matter that comes before them, and do (be it most reverently observed in passing) with very little desire to avoid either prolixity or repetition.

If Lord Thurlow, however, has left no monuments of his judicial eloquence; and if, indeed, his place among lawyers was not the highest, he is admitted to have well understood the ordinary practice and leading principles of those courts in which he had passed his life; and his judgments for the most part gave satisfaction to the profession. He had no mean powers of despatching the business of the court, and of the House of Lords when presiding upon appeals; nor could any man in this article resemble him less than the most eminent of his successors, who was understood to have made him the model in some things of his conversation, garnishing it, after his manner, with expletives rather sonorous than expressive, but more expressive than becoming. Far from showing, like Lord Eldon, a patience which no prolixity could exhaust, and a temper which was neither to be vexed by desperate argumentation nor by endless repetition—farther still from courting protracted and renewed discussion of each matter, already worn threadbare—Lord Thurlow showed to the suitor a determined, and to the bar a surly aspect, which made it perilous to try experiments on the limits of his patience, by making it somewhat doubtful if he had any patience at all. Aware that the judge he was addressing knew enough of their common profession not to be imposed upon, and bore so little deference to any other as to do exactly what suited himself—nay, apprehensive that the measure of his courtesy was too scanty to obstruct the overflow in very audible sounds of the sarcastic and

peremptory matter which eyes of the most fixed gloom, beneath eyebrows formed by nature to convey the abstract idea of a perfect frown, showed to be gathering or already collected—the advocate was compelled to be select in choosing his topics and temperate in handling them; and oftentimes felt reduced to a painful dilemma better fitted for the despatch than the right decision of causes, the alternative being presented of leaving material points unstated, or calling down against his client the unfavourable determination of the Court. It would be incorrect to state that Lord Thurlow, in this respect, equalled or ever resembled Sir John Leach, with whom every consideration made way for the vanity of clearing his cause-paper in a time which rendered it physically impossible for the causes to be heard. But he certainly more nearly approached that extreme than he did the opposite, of endless delay and habitual vacillation of expression rather than of purpose, upon which Lord Eldon made shipwreck of his judicial reputation, though possessing all the greater qualities of a lawyer and a judge. In one important particular he and Sir John Leach closely resembled each other, and as widely differed from the other eminent person who has just been named. While on the bench the mind of both was given wholly to the matter before them, and never wandered from it at all. An ever-wakeful and ever-fixed attention at once enabled them to apprehend the merits of each case, and catch each point at the first statement, precluded the necessity of much after-consideration and reading, and, indeed, rehearing; and kept the advocate's mind also directed to his points, confining his exertions within reasonable limits, while it well rewarded him for his closeness and his conciseness. The judge's reward, too, was proportionably great. He felt none of that load which pressed upon Lord Eldon when he reflected how much remained for him to do after all the fatigue of his attendance in court had been undergone; that anxiety which harassed him lest points should escape his reading that might have been urged in the oral arguments he had heard without listening to them; the irritation which vexed him until he had from long use ceased

to care much for it, when he looked around him upon the inextricable confusion of his judicial affairs, and, like the embarrassed trader, became afraid to look any more, or examine any closer the details of his situation. If a contrast were to be formed between the ease and the discomfort of a seat upon a bench, as far as the personal feelings of the occupiers are concerned, it would hardly be possible to go beyond that which was afforded by Thurlow to Eldon.

Of his powers as a debater there are now no means to form an estimate, except what tradition, daily becoming more scanty and precarious, may supply. He possessed great depth of voice, rolled out his sentences with unbroken fluency, and displayed a confidence both of tone and of assertion which, accompanied by somewhat of Dr. Johnson's balanced sententiousness, often silenced when it did not convince; for of reasoning he was proverbially sparing: there are those indeed who will have it that he never was known to do anything which, when attended to, even looked like using an argument, although, to view the speaker and carelessly to hear him, you would say he was laying waste the whole field of argumentation and dispersing and destroying all his antagonists. His aspect was more solemn and imposing than almost any other person's in public life, so much so that Mr. Fox used to say, it proved him dishonest, since no man could *be* so wise as he *looked*. Nor did he neglect any of the external circumstances, how trifling soever, by which attention and deference could be secured on the part of his audience. Not only were his periods well rounded, and the connecting matter or continuing phrases well flung in, but the tongue was so hung as to make the sonorous voice peal through the hall, and appear to convey things which it would be awful to examine too near, and perilous to question. Nay, to the more trivial circumstances of his place, when addressing the House of Lords, he scrupulously attended. He rose slowly from his seat: he left his woolsack with deliberation; but he went not to the nearest place, like ordinary Chancellors, the sons of mortal men; he drew back by a

pace or two, and standing as it were askance, and partly behind the huge bale he had quitted for a season, he began to pour out, first in a growl, and then in a clear and louder roll, the matter which he had to deliver, and which for the most part consisted in some positive assertions, some personal vituperation, some sarcasms at classes, some sentences pronounced upon individuals as if they were standing before him for judgment, some vague mysterious threats of things purposely not expressed, and abundant protestations of conscience and duty, in which they who keep the consciences of Kings are somewhat apt to indulge.

It is obvious that to give any examples that could at all convey an idea of this kind of vamped up, outside, delusive, nay, almost fraudulent oratory, would be impossible. But one or two passages may be rehearsed. When he had, in 1778, first intrigued actively with the Whigs and the Prince upon the Regency question, being apparently inclined to prevent his former colleague and now competitor, from clutching that prize—suddenly discovering from one of the physicians, the approaching convalescence of the Royal patient, he at one moment's warning quitted the Carlton House party, and came down with an assurance unknown to all besides, perhaps even to himself not known before, and in his place undertook the defence of the King's rights against his son and his partisans. The concluding sentence of this unheard-of performance was calculated to set all belief at defiance, coming from the man and in the circumstances. It assumed, for the sake of greater impressiveness, the form of prayer: though certainly it was not poured out in the notes of supplication, but rather rung forth in the sounds that weekly call men to the service: "And when I forget my Sovereign, may my God forget me!" Whereupon Wilkes, seated upon the foot of the throne, and who had known him long and well, is reported to have said, somewhat coarsely, but not unhappily, it must be allowed, "Forget you? He'll see you d——d first." Another speech in a different vein is preserved, and shows some powers of drollery, certainly. In the same

debates, a noble character, who was remarkable for his delicacy and formal adherence to etiquette, having indeed filled diplomatic stations during great part of his life, had cited certain resolutions passed at the Thatched House Tavern by some great party meeting. In adverting to these, Lord Thurlow said, "As to what the noble Lord told you that he had heard at the ale-house—" The effect of this humour, nearly approaching, it must be allowed, to a practical joke, may easily be conceived by those who are aware how much more certain in both Houses of Parliament the success of such things always is, than of the most refined and exalted wit. Upon another occasion, his misanthropy, or rather his great contempt of all mankind, broke out characteristically enough. This prevailing feeling of his mind made all respect testified towards any person, all praise bestowed upon men, nay all defence of them under attack, extremely distasteful to him; indeed, almost matter of personal offence. So once having occasion to mention some public functionary, whose conduct he intimated that he disapproved, he thought fit to add, "But far be it from me to express any blame of any official person, whatever may be my opinion: for that, I well know, would lay me open to hear his panegyric." At the bar he appears to have dealt in much the same wares; and they certainly formed the staple of his operations in the commerce of society. His jest at the expense of two eminent civilians, in the Duchess of Kingston's case, is well known, and was no doubt of considerable merit. After those very learned personages had come forth from the recesses where doctors "most do congregate," but in which they divide with their ponderous tomes the silence that is not broken by any stranger footstep, and the gloom that is pierced by no light from without, and appearing in a scene to which they were as strange as its gayety was to their eyes, had performed alternately the various evolutions of their recondite lore, Mr. Thurlow was pleased to say that the congress of two doctors always reminded him of the noted saying of Crassus—"Mirari se quod haruspex haruspicem sine risu adspicere posset." In con-

versation he was, as in debate, sententious and caustic. Discoursing of the difficulty he had in appointing to a high legal situation, he described himself as long hesitating between the intemperance of A., and the corruption of B.; but finally preferring the former. Then, as if afraid, lest he had for the moment been betrayed into anything like unqualified commendation of any person, he added, correcting himself—"Not that there was not a ——— deal of corruption in A.'s intemperance." He had, however, other stores from which to furnish forth his talk; for he was a man of no mean classical attainments; read much Greek, as well as Latin, after his retirement from office; and having become associated with the Whigs, at least in the intercourse of society, passed a good deal of time in the society of Mr. Fox, for whom it is believed that he felt a great admiration; at least, he praised him in a way exceedingly unusual with him, and was therefore supposed to have admired him as much as he could any person, independent of the kind of thankfulness which he must have felt to any formidable opposer of Mr. Pitt, whom he hated with a hatred as hearty as even Lord Thurlow could feel, commingling his dislike with a scorn wholly unbecoming and misapplied.

When he quitted the Great Seal, or rather when Mr. Pitt and he quarrelling, one or other must go, and the former was well resolved to remain, the retired chancellor appeared to retain a great interest in all the proceedings of the court which he had left, and was fond of having Sir John Leach, then a young barrister, to spend the evenings with him, and relate whatever had passed in the course of the day. It seemed somewhat contrary to his selfish nature and contracted habits of thinking, that he should feel any great concern about the course which the administration of justice should take, now that he slumbered upon the shelf. But the mystery was easily explained, by observing that he really felt, in at least its ordinary force, the affection which men long used to office bear towards those who are so presumptuous as to succeed them; and he was gratified by thus sitting as a secret court of revision, hearing of any

mistakes committed by Lord Loughborough, and pronouncing in no very measured terms his judgment of reversal upon many things in which the latter no doubt was right.

That his determination and clearness were more in manner than in the real vigour of his mind, there can be no doubt; for, though in disposing of causes, he may have shown little oscitancy, as indeed there seldom arises any occasion for it where a judge is reasonably acquainted with his business, and gives his attention without reserve to the despatch of it, yet, in all questions of political conduct, and all deliberations upon measures, he is known to have been exceedingly irresolute. Mr. Pitt found him a colleague wholly unfruitful in council, though always apt to raise difficulties, and very slow and irresolute of purpose. The Whigs, when he joined them, soon discovered how infirm a frame of mind there lay concealed behind the outward form of vigour and dicision. He saw nothing clear but the obstacles to any course; was fertile only of doubts and expedients to escape deciding; and appeared never prompt to act, but ever ready to oppose whoever had anything to recommend. So little, as might be expected, did this suit the restless and impatient vehemence of Mr. Francis, that he described him as "that enemy of all human action."

Of a character so wanting in the sterling qualities which entitle the statesman to confidence and respect, or the orator to admiration, it cannot be affirmed that what he wanted in claims to public favour he made up in titles to esteem or affection as a private individual. His life was passed in so great and habitual a disregard of the decorum usually cast round high station, especially in the legal profession, as makes it extremely doubtful if the grave and solemn exterior in which he was wont to shroud himself were anything more than a manner he had acquired; for assuredly, to assert that he wore it as a cloak whereby men might be deceived, would hardly be consistent with his ordinary habits, as remote as well could be from all semblance of hy-

pocrisy; and so far from an affectation of appearing better than he was, that he might almost be said to affect, like the Regent Orleans, the "bad eminence" of being worse.*

* St. Simon relates a saying of Louis XVI., respecting his celebrated nephew, which, he says, paints him to the life, and, therefore, that skilful writer of memoirs is unbounded in his praise of this "Trait de plume." "Encore est-il fanfaron des vices qu'il n'a pas."

LORD MANSFIELD.

CONTEMPORARY with these two distinguished lawyers, during the latter period of his life, was a legal personage in every respect far more eminent than either, *the first* Lord Mansfield, than whom few men, not at the head of state affairs, have in any period of our history filled an exalted station for a longer period with more glory to themselves, or with a larger share of influence over the fortunes of their country. He was singularly endowed with the qualities most fitted both to smooth for him the path to professional advancement, to win the admiration of the world at large, and to maintain or even expand the authority of whatever official situation he might be called to occupy. Enjoying all the advantages of finished classical education; adding to this the enlargement of mind derived from foreign travel, undertaken at an age when attentive observation can be accompanied with mature reflection; he entered upon the profession of the law some years after he had reached man's estate; and showed as much patient industry in awaiting, by attendance in the courts, the emoluments and the honours of the gown, as he had evinced diligence in qualifying himself for its labours and its duties. His connexion with Scotland easily introduced him into the practice afforded by the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords;* and the accidental indisposition of his leader, a few years afterwards, having given him an opportunity of distinguishing himself before a jury, he speedily rose into extensive practice, not, however, so much in Common-Law courts as in Chancery.

* He soon rose to such eminence in this, that his biographer, Halliday, has mentioned him as engaged in thirty appeals during one session. A worse piece of biography than Halliday's, it may be observed in passing, hardly exists, notwithstanding its having so admirable a subject.

Ten years after he entered the profession he was made Solicitor-General and came into parliament, which he had hitherto shunned, observing, with the caution so characteristic of the man and of the nation, "That he had many respected friends on both sides of the House, and did not care to lose the patronage of both parties for the favour of one." If this principle be as great an honour to his public virtue as to his personal discretion, his biographer has done well to record it in proof of the praises which he lavishes upon him; and certainly nothing in the subsequent course of his life can be found which betokens a falling off from the wary circumspection of his outset in life.

His powers as an advocate were great, though not first-rate. In manner, which he had studied so much that Pope was found one day superintending him while he practised before a looking-glass—in a sweetness of voice which by nature was almost unequalled—in clearness and skill of statement, which he so greatly laboured, that it was said his story was worth other men's argument,—in the wariness and discretion so necessary to one that represents another's interests, as an advocate does his client's,—in knowledge accurate, as far as it went, if not very profound, of the principles of the law: and in an enlarged view of general subjects, whether of jurisprudence or of a more liberal kind—he stood high, either above all his contemporaries, or in their foremost rank. A certain want of vigour, arising from the inroads which his constitutional caution made into the neighbouring dominions of its ally, fear, prevented him from ever filling the first place among advocates; and to anything that deserved the name of genius or of originality he preferred at no time and in no station any claims. Atkins, his staunch admirer, has preserved with extreme eulogy, one of his arguments in a case of great importance; it is learned and able, but far from justifying the preference given to it over those of the other counsel, whose arguments in the same cause are also reported.

In the House of Commons it was his fortune to defend the measures of government, when no men of eminence filled the front ranks of the opposition party,

excepting Mr. Pitt (Lord Chatham); and the perilous task of encountering him always was reserved for the ministerial chief himself. That he was very successful as an elegant and persuasive speaker, is certain; that he was unequal to fill a first place, at a time when the secret had not been discovered of posting second rate men in such positions, is as undeniable; and it is known that he felt this inadequacy; for an arrangement was at one period proposed, by which he was to have taken the lead, on the part of the government, and he peremptorily declined it. Indeed, he was both conscious of his power lying in a different direction, and resolved to follow the bent at once of his capacity and his inclination. Accordingly, on the death of Chief Justice Ryder, though much pressed to remain in parliament at a time when the ministry could ill spare him from the Treasury Bench, he distinctly intimated that, if he were not promoted to the place which he considered the Attorney-General's right he should cease to hold any place; and a hint which was easily understood was wisely taken.

Over that great court he presided above thirty years; and his administration of its functions during that long period shed a lustre alike upon the tribunal and the judge. Although he had chiefly practised in Chancery and the House of Lords, yet his correct legal understanding, his excellent sense, his familiar acquaintance with the general principles of jurisprudence, easily and speedily supplied any deficiency which he might have in the practice of the Common-Law Courts, and the proceedings at Nisi Prius; while his whole faculties, his temper, and his manners, down to the very defects which he had betrayed as an advocate, were admirably calculated for his more exalted station. His mind and his habits were, indeed, eminently judicial; and it may be doubted if, taking both the externals and the more essential qualities into the account, that go to form a great judge, any one has ever administered the laws in this country, whom we can fairly name as his equal. The greatest clearness of apprehension; quickness sufficient, and not extreme, which, in a judge, is perilous often allied with impatience, and apt to degenerate into

hastiness; admirable perspicuity of statement, whether delivering his opinion to the court and the bar, or giving his directions to a jury; conciseness with clearness; these were the contributions which his understanding made towards the formation of his judicial character. Then he had a constant command of himself, never betrayed into anger, or impatience, nor ever showing spleen or any other breach of strict equality and perfect equanimity, either towards parties or their advocates. To those higher qualities, intellectual and moral, he added the graces of a diction classical and elegant; the ornament, and, indeed, the illustration of frequent reference to larger views than the more technical discussion of legal questions requires; and the fascination of a voice singularly flexible and sweet; and he flung over the whole of this fine judicial figure the garb of a manner at once dignified and attractive. They who never had seen Lord Thurlow, might well imagine they had heard him, if they enjoyed access to such excellent imitators as George IV. and Lord Holland. As perfect a substitute for Lord Mansfield's manner was to be found in Lord Erskine, between whom and that celebrated person, there long prevailed a great intimacy founded upon very sincere mutual admiration.

The benefits conferred by this accomplished judge upon the Court where he so long presided, and upon its suitors, were manifold and substantial. He began by at once so regulating the distribution of the business, as to remove all uncertainty of the matters which should be taken up each day, and to diminish both the expense and the delay and the confusion of former times. He restored to the whole bar the privilege of moving in turn, instead of confining this to the last day of the term. He almost abolished the tedious and costly practice of having the same case argued several times over, restricting such rehearings to questions of real difficulty and adequate importance. He gave as many hours to the business both of Banc and of sittings as was required for despatching it without unnecessary delay. The ascendant which he gained both over the Bar and the Bench, precluded all needless prolixity of argument, all unseemly wrangling

between the Court and the Counsel, all inconvenient differences of opinion among the Judges. The result was, that while no time was wasted, great satisfaction was given by the clear and rational grounds upon which the decisions were rested; while the cases were so speedily and so well despatched, that the other Courts of Common Law were drained of their business without the channels of the Court of King's Bench being choked up or overflowing. For nearly thirty years there were not more than half a dozen cases in which the Judges differed; and not so many in which the judgments pronounced were reversed.

But during a considerable period Lord Mansfield also presided in the House of Lords, or, as a legal member of that body, directed its decisions upon appeals. Nothing could be more satisfactory than his conduct of this very important department; nor anything less resembling one at least of his most eminent successors, Lord Eldon, in discharging this duty. He was master of each case when it was called on for hearing, and put the counsel to argue the points made on either side in those expensively prepared printed statements, which Lord Eldon used to treat with the attention due to equal masses of waste paper. But he did not prevent any new points from being raised at the bar, any more than he could wish to prevent any new arguments from being urged in support of the points which the printed cases disclosed. He showed, too, as great firmness and vigour in forming his judgment, although upon questions of foreign law, as he did in expediting the conduct of the arguments, although in the hands of advocates accustomed to somewhat prolix statements. Where he was clearly convinced that the Scotch Judges had mistaken their own law, he did not scruple to reverse their decisions, and restore the violated purity of the system, although in doing so he assumed to correct those who had made it the study of their lives; even upon heads peculiar to Scottish jurisprudence, to which the English law affords no parallel, and on which he could derive no light at all from his own professional habits. It was he who reversed the decision of the Court of Session upon

the celebrated Duntreath case; which, as ruled by him, forms now as much the corner-stone of the Scotch law of entail, as Shelly's case does that of England; and, while all lawyers are now agreed that he was right, it may fairly be doubted whether some of his successors, and especially Lord Eldon, would have ventured to overrule some other judgments in which the Scottish Courts had equally gone astray in applying their own law, had not Lord Mansfield shown the salutary courage which he displayed in that first and most remarkable reversal. It is not easy to overrate the importance of such an able and judicious administration of the powers vested in the High Court of Appeal. Encumbered as that tribunal is with so many difficulties from the foreign law which it must needs administer, and without those aids from the Judges, which it has at hand upon the far better known and more settled matters of English Jurisprudence, nothing can preserve the purity of our judicial system, or retain towards it the respect and affection of the Scottish nation, except a succession of such able, enlightened, and determined judges as Lord Mansfield in that high Court ever proved himself to be.

Upon all common cases where a judge can have no possible reason for leaning towards one side rather than another in a country where judicial bribery or solicitation is unknown, no breach of strict justice can ever be committed except through the temper of the individual, or his want of firmness towards particular practitioners. But occasionally there arise questions in our Courts, and especially in the King's Bench, the first criminal tribunal of the realm, where political considerations mix themselves with the trial, and where the result affects party interests or party prejudices—questions, the occurrence of which would have made the placing a Lord Chief Justice in the cabinet a grievous breach of the constitution in 1806, although there had been no other reasons against that most reprehensible proceeding. That Lord Mansfield was no longer the same pattern of living justice, the same *lex loquens* on those occasions, has been very generally affirmed; and although the errors of his enemies, especially of Junius,

have been long since exploded, there is little room to doubt that in trials for libel he leant against the freedom of discussion, and favoured those doctrines long current, but now cried down by statute, which withdrew the cognizance of the question from the Jury to vest it in the Court. That he felt the same disgust at newspaper attacks upon individuals, the same dislike of vehement and unmeasured invectives against the abuses of our institutions, the same alarm at assaults upon the existing institutions themselves, which in all ages have distinguished all our judges, may readily be admitted. Who will pretend even in our days, far more before Mr. Fox's Libel Act, that Lord Mansfield alone of all judges defined the liberty of the press only as a power of publishing without a previous license? In this, as in all his opinions and prejudices upon the subject, he resembled all other judges of all former times, and, with very few exceptions, those also of our own day. But that he should ever betray his prejudices or his feelings in any breach of justice while trying particular cases, would have been eminently inconsistent with the whole tenor of his cautious and circumspect demeanour upon the bench, and have betokened a want of that self-command which in him was so habitual as to have become truly a second nature. His leaning towards the side of authority was once or twice remarked in cases of importance, but cases where both the legal principle and the practice were far from being clearly settled. Thus upon application for a mandamus to the justices to make an order of filiation upon a foreign ambassador's secretary, he somewhat hastily refused it, supposing the motion to be a device for obtaining the court's opinion, and an attempt to draw it into collision with foreign states. This view was manfully resisted by the counsel who moved; and Mr. Justice Yates took part with them. In the end Lord Mansfield gave way, and the remedy was granted as sought. But it must be observed, that the third judge present, Mr. Justice Aston, at first entirely concurred with the Chief Justice, and only changed his opinion upon further consideration, being moved by the reasoning of the dissenting judge. Great objection

was likewise taken to his directing a jury in the case of Lord Grosvenor's action for seduction, against the Duke of Cumberland, that the rank and station of the plaintiff made no difference in his claim to damages; an opinion which, after the greater experience of later times in such proceedings, appears as soon as it is stated to be altogether erroneous, but, which if it favoured the Prince who was defendant on the one hand, certainly indicated, on the other, a sufficient respect for the equal rights of all classes of plaintiffs, and might be as unpalatable to the Aristocracy as it was pleasing to the Crown.

There needs little to be said of what at the time created great discussion in the profession, the judgment which he delivered in the celebrated case of Perrin *v.* Blake. That it was erroneous, no lawyer can doubt. But that it required all the adherence to strict principle of which the most technical mind is susceptible, to apply in such a question the famous Rule in Shelly's case, is equally certain; for in order to make that application, and to consummate the triumph of the Rule, it was necessary for the court to construe a man's will giving an estate "for the life of the devisee, and no longer," as a gift of that estate to him in tail, consequently with the power of at once converting his interest into a fee simple. Although it is impossible to deny that this is the true legal construction of such a devise, if, as in the case of J. Williams's will the remainder is afterwards given to the heirs of the devisee's body; for to hold otherwise would be to abrogate the Rule in Shelly's case, which is both founded on strict legal principles, and has for centuries been the corner-stone of English conveyancing: yet it is fit that we keep in mind the apparent paradox to which it led, in order to account for so great a judge as Lord Mansfield having leant against the application, which he regarded as an extension of the Rule; and from which his wise and wholesome habit of always as much as possible prefering substance to technicality made him deviate. It must also be observed, that here, as in the former instance, he had the concurrence of his learned brethren, except-

ing only Mr. Justice Yates; whose difference of opinion led to his leaving the court of King's Bench, and removing to the Common Pleas for the very short residue of his truly respectable and useful life.* But an accident of a most unimportant kind made more talk in Westminster Hall than all the real merits of either the Judges or the cause. It appeared that while at the bar Lord Mansfield's opinion had been taken upon the point raised by this very will, and that he had said, as he ought to have said, "The devisee takes an estate tail, and not for life." Surely no one can ever read the remarks of Mr. Booth, Mr. Fearne, and other conveyancers upon this trifling circumstance, and not marvel at their pedantry and captiousness, so little worthy of such learned and able men. What if Mr. Murray's opinion differed from Lord Mansfield's judgment? It would not have proved the judgment to have been wrong; and if the councillor had given, what on more mature deliberation, and after hearing the case argued by all the learning of the bar, the Judge deemed an erroneous opinion, was he to sacrifice his duty of deciding by his conscience at the time, to an unworthy fear of appearing inconsistent? If his opinion had undergone a change, was he not to avow it? Nay, was it any shame to change his opinion upon hearing the subject for the first time fully discussed?

The ridiculous charge brought by Junius and others against his direction to the jury on the Home Circuit, in a case of trespass between two unknown individuals, and where no possible motive for partiality could be imagined or was ever pretended, we hardly perhaps should mention, were it not an illustration of the outcry which absolute ignorance may sometimes succeed in raising. It was the case of Mears *v.* Ansell, which was

* This able, learned, and upright judge, showed a courage greatly extolled in those times, but which, it is to be hoped, every member of the bench would now display as a matter of course. The Minister having tampered with him in vain previous to some trial involving rights of the Crown, the King was foolish or wicked enough to write to him a letter, and he returned it unopened. Alderman Townsend stated this in Parliament, and it was not contradicted.

tried before him on the circuit, in 1772; and a new trial was granted by the Common Pleas on the ground that the Chief Justice had improperly directed the Jury to credit the testimony of two subscribing witnesses, contrary to their signed attestation. Junius called it "a new disgrace of Mansfield;" and the note to his published letter, with profound ignorance of the whole practice of the courts, mentioned it as a proof of extraordinary dissatisfaction with the summing up, that the new trial was granted without the payment of costs; adding, "that the usual terms were thus dispensed with." The same *learned* note adds, that the plaintiff's attorney moved the next term to have his name struck off the Roll of the King's Bench attorneys, and that "he was immediately admitted into the Common Pleas;" a mere matter of course, as every one but Junius must have known.

As to Junius's charge of illegal conduct in bailing a felon taken with the mainour, his celebrated letter betrays as great ignorance of the most commonly known matters of law (*e. g.*, that Justices of Peace are at sessions Judges of Record, and are King's Justices) as it does confusion in argument, and vacillation through legal ignorance, and uncertainty about the grounds on which he rests his charge. Indeed, he himself shifted them in defending his first argument; and it was at the time universally allowed that he was altogether in the wrong. Lord Camden was said at first to have agreed with him; but that he abandoned so untenable a ground is plain from his never once, though called upon, venturing to touch the subject. But when he had valiantly denounced impeachment against the Chief Justice for this bail case, much after the manner of Cobbet and others in after times, this writer charged him with gross partiality in reversing the decree against Lord Chatham upon the suit arising out of the Burton Pynsent devise; and after this reversal had been so audaciously ascribed to corrupt favour, towards his political antagonist too, when the matter was examined, it was found that the Commissioners of the Great Seal had only considered one point, and on that had made their decree, whereas

there remained another point decisive of the matter, which way soever the former might be determined. Upon this new point the Judges were consulted, and upon this they were unanimous for the appeal, although upon the others they differed; so that a reversal of the decree was almost a matter of course, and it was much rather the act of the Judges than of Lord Mansfield. Junius being overthrown by this plain and incontrovertible statement, had the courage to treat it as a quibble only worthy of a barrister (Letter LXIII.), although he had himself before explicitly said, that he was at issue with Lord Mansfield's defenders on the question, whether or not he (Lord Mansfield) had given any opinion on the case in the House of Lords, and "that this was the question of fact to be determined by the evidence only." (Letter LXI.)

These things are far indeed from being unimportant. They affect essentially the question of judicial reputation. They show upon what kind of grounds the fabric of a great man's professional fame, as well as the purity of his moral character, were assailed by the unprincipled violence of party at the instigation of their ignorance, skulking behind a signature made famous by epigrammatic language, and the boldness of being venturesome in the person of a printer who gained by allowing dastardly slander to act through him with a vicarious courage. They lead to reduce the estimate of such an author's value as much as they raise the reputation of those whom, from his lurking-place, he had assailed; and they read a memorable lesson to the people, if upon such subjects the people ever can be taught, not to repose confidence in those who are unknown against men whose whole lives are passed in the face of open day, and under the constant security of personal responsibility. Nor let it be forgotten upon what flimsy pretences the country was required to embark in a persecution of Lord Mansfield. Nor let it cease to be remembered that upon such grounds as we have been surveying the most popular writers of the day were suffered to call him "cowardly"—"cunning"—"dishonest"—"a juggler"—"a bad man and a worse

judge"—"a creature at one time hateful, at another contemptible"—"one meriting every term of reproach and every idea of detraction the mind can form"—"a cunning Scotchman, who never speaks truth without a fraudulent design"—"a man of whom it is affirmed, with the most solemn appeal to God, that he is the very worst and most dangerous man in the kingdom."* But it turned out afterwards that the same anonymous writer, who, while he wore the mask of Junius, almost ever praised Lord Chatham, had under other disguises assailed him as bitterly as he had his antagonists; and his rancorous abuse of the great patriot does all but outstrip his slanderous assaults upon the venerable judge. He (Lord Chatham) is described as "not a man of mixed character, whose vice might be redeemed by some appearance of virtue and generosity, but a man purely and perfectly bad." It is said we may easily foretell "the progress of such a traitor, and the probable event of his crimes," since he led "a life of artifice, intrigue, hypocrisy, and impudence;" a career "which equally violates every principle of honour and morality"—"an abandoned profligate"—"so black a villain, that though we have no Tarpeian rock, yet a gibbet is not too honourable a situation for the carcass of a traitor"—"a base apostate"—"the stalking-horse of a stallion" (Lord Bute)—"below contempt"—"a venomous reptile"—"a lunatic"—and "a raving madman."† The great gravaman, too, of these charges against him is his leaning towards the Americans, of whom the furious, shallow, and conceited writer was a bitter and intemperate opponent, as he was a bigoted advocate of the mother-country's tyranny.

It may surely be said with justice, that such disclosures as these, while they reduce to their true level the claims of Junius to fame, easily account for the author having died and kept his own secret. He appears to have been a person in whose bosom every fierce and malignant passion raged without the control of a sound

* Junius's Letters, xli., lix., lxiii., lxix.

† Miscellaneous Letters published by Woodfall (1814), vol. ii.

judgment, and without any kindly feeling to attemper his nature. Writing at a time when good or even correct composition was little studied, and in the newspapers hardly ever met with, his polished style, though very far from being a correct one, and further still from good pure English, being made the vehicle of abuse, sarcasm, and pointed invective, naturally excited a degree of attention which was further maintained by the boldness of his proceedings. No man can read a page of any letter without perceiving that the writer has but one way of handling every subject, and that he constructs his sentences with the sole design of saying the most bitter things he can in the most striking way, without ever regarding in the least degree their being applicable or inapplicable to the object of the attack. The consequence is that the greater part of his invective will just suit one bad man or wicked minister as well as another. It is highly probable that whoever he might be, he had often attacked those with whom he lived on intimate terms, or to whom he was under obligations. This affords an additional reason for his dying unrevealed. That he was neither Lord Ashburton, nor any other lawyer, is proved by what we have said of his gross ignorance of law. To hold that he was Mr. Francis, is libelling that gentleman's memory; and although much external evidence occurs in pointing towards him, he certainly never wrote anything of the same kind in his own character.

But those charges made against Lord Mansfield's judicial conduct were definite and precise. Others were urged of a kind so vague, that it was impossible distinctly to apprehend or pointedly to meet them. He was accused of encroaching upon the certainty of the common law, by making his views bend to general notions of substantial justice. That he was always anxious to get at the body of the case, and deal with it so as to give merited success to undoubted right, is admitted; and in sometimes neglecting the dictates of technical rules, when they obstructed his path towards substantial justice, he might possibly overlook the great advantages of having a fixed rule applicable to all cases; advantages

well worth the unavoidable price which must be paid for them in the occasional hardship, or even apparent absurdity, that may attend their inflexible application. But when the same objection is advanced to his introducing rules universally applicable, and choosing those which are more consistent with common sense and liberal feeling than with merely technical analogy, we are bound to turn from the criticism with indignation. By this course he was improving our jurisprudence, and not encroaching upon its principles; nor was the certainty of the law in any way impaired by establishing its rules upon an enlarged basis.

That he was fond of drawing over equitable notions from the courts in which he had been chiefly trained, and applying them to the consideration of legal matters, is the same objection in another form. Some of the most valuable portions of our common law remedies are derived from Equity; witness the action for money had and received, and indeed the action of *Indebitatus assumpsit* generally: and special pleaders who never saw a bill or an answer, but when they were used in evidence at *Nisi Prius*, such men as Mr. Justice Chambre, (among the first ornaments of his profession, as among the most honest and amiable of men,) have shown their sense of the advantage thus gained to the common law by reminding other but less learned men, like Lord Chief Justice Gibbs, of this circumstance, when they grounded their argument upon the position that the point they were attacking was one of an equitable, and not of a legal consideration. As for the clamour (and it was nothing more than clamour, and ignorant clamour too), that Lord Mansfield was making the old Saxon principles of our jurisprudence bend to those of the Civil Law, it is wholly marvellous that men of any understanding or education should have ever been found so much the slaves of faction as to patronise it. Lord Mansfield, at no period of his life ever had, or could have had the least predilection of the civil law, arising from any familiarity with its institutions. He never was a Scotch advocate at all; or if he was, it must have been in the cradle, for he left Scotland at three years of age. With the con-

sistorial Courts, if by their practice the Civil Law is meant, he had necessarily very little intercourse.* Chancery has nothing to do with that system unless in so far as it prefers the bad practice of written depositions to *viva voce* examinations; and also in so far as every rational system of jurisprudence must necessarily have much in common with the most perfect structure that ever was performed of rules for classifying rights and marshalling the remedies for wrongs. Nor can anything be found in all the train of his decisions which betokens more leaning towards the Roman code, than a regard for the enlarged and universal principles of abstract justice sanctioned, if it did not prescribe. Yet could the most popular writers of the day, those too whose pretences even to legal learning were the most obtrusive, denounce the Chief Justice as engaged in a deliberate plot to reduce slavery to system, "by making the Roman code the law of nations, and the opinion of foreign civilians his perpetual theme," after the example of "the Norman lawyers, who made the Norman Conquest complete;" and as thus "corrupting by such treacherous arts the noble simplicity and free spirit of our Saxon laws."† Ignorance cannot surely go beyond this point. The civil law only became hostile to liberty, through the imperial portion of it introduced by the Emperors, and which made the will of the Prince the law of the land. In no other particular is it at variance with freedom; and who ever dreamt that Lord Mansfield had the power of introducing that portion, let his inclination have been ever so much bent in such a direction?

But this topic leads us to the political charges which were brought against this great magistrate. Unfortunately for his fame as well as for his tranquillity, he

* It would, in our times, have been impossible for him to have any practice at all in these courts, unless in cases of appeal, formerly before the Delegates, now in the Privy Council. But when Lord Mansfield was at the bar it was the custom for common lawyers to attend important cases in Doctor's Commons. This, however, was of rare occurrence.

† Junius's Letters, No. xli.

continued to mix in politics, after he ceased to be in the service of the crown as an advocate. He not only acted as speaker of the House of Lords for above a year, but for a much longer time he had a seat in the cabinet, and took a part in the business of government, all the more objectionable in his position, that it was much more active than it was open and avowed.

While the Great Seal was in commission previous to Lord Bathurst's obtaining it as Chancellor, Lord Mansfield was, to all political intents and purposes, the Chancellor, without having the responsibility of that high office. Nor did he less act as the legal adviser of the government, when that worthy, but somewhat feeble individual, more ostensibly filled the place. The vice of the Chief Justice's character was a want of boldness, that made him shrink from personal responsibility. Hence he never would accept the first station in the law; and hence, too, he was believed to have urged or advised many things, which he either had opposed or had only passively suffered; for, when once a statesman acquires the evil reputation of shunning responsibility while he seeks power, there is no preventing the world from tracing every mischief to a source which appears to hide itself only because there is something to conceal.

The same want of nerve more than once appeared in his judicial proceedings. When Lord Camden, a man inferior to him in everything but courage, openly attacked his libel law in Woodfall's case, and dared him to defend it, he contented himself with saying, "He would not answer interrogatories." He afterwards challenged Lord Camden to meet him and argue the question, and when Lord Camden named his day, he refused to debate it. He then had the Lords summoned to hear the matter discussed; and he came down and had the house precipitately adjourned, after giving in a paper to the clerk, containing a note of the Opinions of the Judges. When asked if he meant to have it taken into consideration by the house, and would move accordingly, he said, "Oh no, he only meant to give the peers an opportunity of seeing, and, if they chose, taking

copies of the note." When desired to say if he would have it entered on the journals, his answer again was, "No, only to leave it with the clerk." We may venture to affirm that no such course of proceeding could safely be pursued by the boldest judge of our own day, or would be resorted to by the most timid. We may also form an opinion from such conduct in that great judge, how very different a line he would have taken in such a struggle with the commons, as his honest and patriotic successor has lately been engaged in, had he lived in these times of high parliamentary pretension.

If we possess hardly any remains of Lord Mansfield's speeches at the bar or in Parliament, we have considerable materials from which to form an estimate of his judicial eloquence. The Reports of Sir James Burrows are carefully corrected, to all appearance; probably by the learned Judges themselves. Many of the judgments of the Chief Justice are truly admirable in substance, as well as composition; and upon some of the greater questions, his oratory rises to the full height of the occasion. It would be difficult to overrate the merit of the celebrated address to the public, then in a state of excitement almost unparalleled, with which he closed his judgment upon the application to reverse Wilkes's outlawry. Great elegance of composition, force of diction, just and strong but natural expression of personal feelings, a commanding attitude of defiance to lawless threats, but so assumed and so tempered with the dignity which was natural to the man, and which here, as on all other occasions, he sustained throughout, all render this one of the most striking productions on record. The courage, however, rested mainly, if not entirely, in the tone and the words; for, after disposing of the argument, and on all the grounds taken at the bar refusing the reversal, he arrives, by a short and unexpected by-way, at the means of granting Mr. Wilkes's application; and he was therefore well aware, all the while, that he was reversing the accustomed relation of the *suaviter* and the *fortiter;* nor could be said to do otherwise than couch in the language of rebuke and refusal a full compliance with the popular demands.

His character in private life was unimpeachable. He never had any children, but his domestic virtues were without a stain. His choicest relaxation was in the polished society of literary men and lovers of the arts; and his powers of conversation are extolled in all the traditions that have reached the present age, as of a very high order. That his manners were polished and winning can easily be believed from the impression his public appearance uniformly made. But when to these were added his great and various knowledge, chiefly of a kind available to the uses of society, his cheerful spirit and mild temper, his love of harmless pleasantry, and his power of contributing towards it by a refined and classical wit, it is not difficult to understand what the reports mean which unite in describing him as fascinating beyond almost all other men of his time. Through a vigorous constitution, upon which no excess of any kind, in mind or in body, had ever made inroads, he lived to an extreme old age, dying from exhausted nature when near ninety. He presided in court regularly till he reached his eighty-second year, and resigned formally in his eighty-fourth, having continued to hold his high office for two or three years longer than he ought to have done or could discharge its duties, in the hope of prevailing with the ministry to appoint his favourite Judge Buller his successor. But Mr. Pitt while at the bar, had seen things in that able and unscrupulous magistrate which made him resolve that no such infliction should fall on the English bench; and it is to his virtuous resolution that the preference of Lord Kenyon was due, which Lord Thurlow always arrogated to himself.

It has become the more necessary to dwell at some length upon the history of this great man, because a practice has prevailed of late years in the profession which he adorned, and even upon the bench which he so much more than any of his predecessors illustrated, of treating him with much less respect than is his due. The narrow minds of little men cannot expand even to the full apprehension of that excellence with which superior natures are gifted, or which they have by cul-

ture attained. They are sufficiently susceptible however of envious feelings to begrudge virtue the admiration which it has justly earned; and jealous that any portion of applause should be drawn away from the puny technicalities of their own obscure walk, they carp at some trifling slips which may have been made in the less weighty matters of the law, the only portions their understandings can grasp. It has thus grown into a kind of habit with some men, very respectable in their own department, to decry Lord Mansfield as no lawyer, to speak lightly of his decisions, and to gratulate themselves that he did not intrude yet greater changes into our legal system by further departure from strict rules. But a more enlarged view even of the rigorous doctrines of our jurisprudence, will at once brush these cavils away, and show the truth of a position ever denied by the vulgar both gowned and ungowned, that great minds may be as correct in details, as powerful to deal with the most general principles.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE GIBBS.

Of the class of the inferior though able men to whom we have just referred, the late Sir Vicary Gibbs was certainly among the most eminent; and he had all the perfections of the order, and more than the ordinary share of its faults. It is a great error committed only by those who view them from afar off, to imagine that their learning is of a confined nature, either in their own profession or in other branches of education. They are in no respect mere special pleaders, or men familiar only with the practice of the courts. They are even in some respects not to be termed mere lawyers. They are acquainted with the whole of the law, which they have studied accurately, and might also be admitted to have studied profoundly, if depth can be predicated of those researches, which, instinctively dreading to penetrate the more stubborn and more deep-lying vein of first principle, always carry the labourer towards the shallower and softer bed that contains the relics of former workmen, and make him rest satisfied with these patterns as the guide and the rule. All that has been said or written, however, by text-men or by judges, they know; and of it all much practice has given them great expertness in the application. Then their education has not been confined to mere matter of law. It has indeed been far from a very enlarged one; nor has it brought them into a familiar acquaintance with the scenes which expand the mind, make it conscious of new powers, and lead it to compare, and expatiate, and explore. Yet has this course of instruction not been without its value; for they are generally well versed in classical literature, and often acquainted with mathematical science. From the one, however, they derive little beside the polish which it communicates, and the taste which it refines; from the other, they only gain a love of strict and inflexible rules, with a disinclination towards the relaxation and

allowances prescribed by the diversities of moral evidence. From both they gather a profound deference for all that has been said or done before them, an exclusive veneration for antiquity, and a pretty unsparing contempt for the unlettered and unpolished class which form and ever must form the great bulk of mankind in all communities. A disrespect for all foreign nations and their institutions, has long been another appointed fruit of the same tree; and it has been in proportion to the overweening fondness for everything in our own system, whether of polity or of mere law. The long interruption of all intercourse with the continent during the late war, had greatly increased these narrow and absurd prejudices, which are now somewhat more nearly brought back to their ancient level. But still the precise dictates of English statutes, and the dicta of English judges and English text-writers, are with them the standard of justice: and in their vocabulary, English law is as much a synonyme for the perfection of wisdom, as in that of Dean Swift's imaginary kingdom, Houynhm, was for the "perfection of nature."

Of lawyers who belong to this class, by far the most numerous in the profession, it is also a great mistake to suppose that the talents are confined to mere legal matters, the discussion of dry points, and the conduct of suits according to technical rules. Many of them are subtle and most able arguers; some even powerful reasoners. As admirable a display of logical acumen, in long and sustained chains of pure ratiocination, is frequently exhibited among their ranks as can be seen in the cultivators of any department of rhetoric, or the students of any branch of science. They often make high pretences to eloquence, and, without attaining its first rank, are frequently distinguished for great powers of speech as well as extraordinary skill in the management of business. Their legal reputation, however, is the chief object of their care; and in their pursuit of oratory, they aim far more at being eloquent lawyers, than orators learned in the law. Hence their estimate of professional merit is all formed on the same principle, and graduated by one scale. They undervalue the accomplishments

of the rhetorician, without despising them: and they are extremely suspicious of any enlarged or general views upon so serious a subject as the law. Change, they with difficulty can bring their minds to believe possible; at least any change for the better; and speculation or theory on such matters is so much an object of distrust, or rather of mingled contempt and aversion, that when they would describe anything ridiculous, or even anomalous in the profession, they cannot go beyond what they call "a speculative lawyer." To expect success in such a one's career was formerly thought absurd. But the great triumph of Sir Samuel Romilly was a sore stumbling-block to technical minds. A free-thinker upon legal matters, if ever any existed; accomplished, learned, eloquent, philosophical; he yet rose to the very head of his profession, and compelled them to believe what Erskine had failed to make them admit—that a man may be minutely learned in all the mere niceties of the law, down to the very meanest details of Court Practice, and yet be able to soar above the higher levels of general speculation and to charm by his eloquence, and enlighten by his enlarged wisdom, as much as to rule the Bench and head the Bar by his merely technical superiority.

The professional character of the men whom we are discussing is generally pure and lofty; the order to which they belong is sacred in their eyes; its fame, its dignity, even to its etiquette, must all be kept unsullied; and whatever may be their prejudices and their habits, political or professional, how great soever their deference to power, how profound their veneration for the bench, how deep-rooted their attachment to existing institutions, how fierce their hostility to all innovations, how grave or how scornful their frown upon the multitude at large, yet is their courage undaunted in defending whatever client may intrust his suit to their patronage, be he a rabble-leader or a treason-monger, a libeller or a blasphemer; and in discharging towards him the high duties of their representative character, they so little regard either the resentment of the government or the anger of the court, that they hardly are conscious of any effort in sacrificing every personal

consideration to the performance of their representative, and because it is representative, their eminently important office.

Of the men whom we have now endeavoured to portray as a class, Sir Vicary Gibbs was a perfect sample. Endowed by nature with great acuteness, and an unlimited power of application, he became, to use his own somewhat unseemly expression, towards as considerable a man as himself, and a far more amiable one, "as good a lawyer as that kind of man can be." Disciplined by an excellent classical education, the fruits of which stuck by him to the last, and somewhat acquainted with the favourite pursuits of Cambridge men, his taste was always correct, and his reasoning powers were as considerable as they ever can be in a mind of his narrow range. To eloquence he made only moderate pretences; yet was his language, which gurgled out rather than flowed, often happy, always clear and transparent, owning a source sufficiently pure, if somewhat shallow, and conveying ideas not numerous, not original, not fetched from afar, not brought up from the lower beds of the well, yet suited to each occasion, well under control, and made easily accessible to others in the same proportion in which they were correctly apprehended by himself. His legal arguments were often much to be admired. He did not go by steps, and move on from point to point, garnishing each head with two observations, as many citations, and twice as many cases; so that the whole argument should be without breadth or relief, and each single portion seem as much as any other the pivot upon which the conclusion turned—but he brought out his governing principle roundly and broadly; he put forward his leading idea by which the rest were to be marshalled and ruled; he used the master-key at once, and used it throughout, till he had unlocked all the apartments by which he mounted to the Great Chamber, and he left the closets untouched, that they who followed him might, if they chose, waste their time in picking the locks; or lose their way in the dark by-passages. It might be said of him, as he said himself of Sir James Mansfield, that "he declared the law," while he argued his cases;

and while others left only the impression on the hearer that many authorities had been cited, and much reading displayed, his argument penetrated into the mind, and made it assent to his positions, without much regarding the support they found from other quarters. But he was also a very considerable person at *Nisi Prius.* His correct and easy knowledge of all legal matters was here by no means his only superiority. He was ready in dealing with evidence: he could present to the jury the facts of his case boldly and in high relief; though he was wholly unable to declaim, and never dreamt of addressing the feelings or the passions, any more than if he were speaking to mummies without any sensation, much less any feelings or passions to address; yet he could, especially when clothed with the dignity of high official station, deliver himself with considerable emphasis, though without any fluency, and could effect the purpose of impressing the facts upon the Jury's mind, by the same strong and even choice phrases, sparingly used, though coming out with little flow of words, and no roundness of period, which we have remarked among the characteristics of his arguments to the court upon the law. Those who heard his cross-examination of Colonel Wardle, in the prosecution of Mrs. Clarke, and who understood the real circumstances in which the concerted cross-examination of Major Glenie and Captain Dodd was conducted by Mr. Garrow, could be at no loss in greatly preferring the former display of professional skill and energy. Nor was his address to the jury less remarkable for energy and for skill. It was a case indeed in which his whole feelings were strongly embarked; he had defended the Duke of York with much ability of a professional kind in the House of Commons, where other influences than that of pure reason were very prevalent; and he rejoiced to meet upon his own ground the adversaries whom he had failed to defeat upon theirs.

The Treason Trials of 1794 were the occasion of this able barrister first being introduced to public notice, and they accelerated his professional rise, although he had already been made secure of great success. He

was second counsel to Mr. Erskine,* as Mr. Erskine had been in Lord George Gordon's case to Mr. Kenyon, afterwards Lord Chief Justice. But although Mr. Gibbs's summing up of the evidence was allowed, on all hands, to be a masterly performance, and of very signal service to the cause, the overwhelming genius of his great leader so far eclipsed him, that while, in 1780, no one spoke of the chief, but all admiration was reserved for the second in command, in 1794 the leader alone was mentioned, and the important contribution made by the junior to the mighty victory escaped all but professional observation. In Westminster Hall, however, it was estimated at its real worth; and, notwithstanding his narrow-minded notions on political matters, his slavish adherence to the Tory party, his bigotted veneration for existing things, and hatred of all disaffection, or even discontent, the courage and perseverance which he displayed throughout that trying scene, both towards the government, whom he was defeating in their frantic scheme, and towards the court, whom he was constantly joining his leader to beard, was not surpassed by the technical ability which he showed,—nay, was not exceeded even by the manly boldness which won for that leader the most imperishable of all his titles to the admiration and gratitude of mankind.

The general narrowness of Sir Vicary Gibbs's mind has been marked; but on the side of vanity and self-conceit it was out of proportion to its dimensions in other parts. It always seemed as if no one could do anything to please him, save one individual; and *his* performances were rated at the most exorbitant value. Nay, the opinion of that favoured personage he esti-

* There was a third, on account of the extreme labour cast upon the counsel, and by a kind of connivance, the Court permitted this, although the statute of William III. only allows two, while the Crown had above half a dozen. This third was Mr., now Baron, Gurney, a warm friend of civil and religious liberty, and of that highly respectable and useful family to whom the art of stenography and the history of public proceedings owes much; and whose steady and honest adherence to their principles covers them with honour.

mated so highly, that there always lay an appeal to him from the bench, as well as from every other authority; and it was sometimes truly laughable to observe the weight which he attached to a single sentence or a word from which one with whom he was ever so entirely satisfied. On a certain trial he had occasion to mention some recent victories of Lord Wellington's army in the Peninsula, and had named three battles with praise not very lavish, because every word was deemed of inestimable value, but had omitted Busaco; he corrected himself very ostentatiously, and went back to include that fight, with the feeling manifest to all who heard him, that real and irreparable, possibly fatal injury, would be done to the troops, had the momentary omission unhappily not been supplied. When he came among the heads of the law, whether in his own court or at occasional meetings of the twelve, even while junior puisne judge, he arrogated the place and deference due to the chief of the whole; and when he was made first Chief Baron, and afterwards Chief Justice, there were no bounds to his contempt for all the opinions of all his brethren, although it is an undeniable fact, that he was not nearly so much distinguished for the soundness of his opinions upon the bench as he had been for the excellence of his arguments at the bar. In trials at *Nisi Prius* he was distinguished for the little and peevish temper which predominated in him, often to the seeming injury of his judgment, almost always to the detriment of his judicial powers; and so absolutely was he persuaded of his own universal capacity, and the universal unfitness of others, that it was no uncommon thing for him to ask, somewhat roughly, for a council's brief, that he might see what was intended to be stated; then lecture the attorney who had prepared it; soon after the witnesses; and down to the officers of the court, whose functions of keeping silence and order he would occasionally himself undertake to perform. So that it was not an uncommon remark, that the learned Chief Justice was performing at once in his own person, the offices of judge and jury, counsel for both parties, attorneys for both, witnesses on both sides, and crier of the court.

To the same conceited spirit was owing his much graver offence of parading rash opinions upon branches of the law with which the previous habits of his life had never brought him very familiarly acquainted, and even of forming hasty judgments upon matters to which he was more accustomed. Certain it is, that there were decisions, both of his own at *Nisi Prius*, and afterwards of the Court in Banc, which he persisted in forcing upon his brethren, and which do little credit to any of the parties concerned in them.

The survey which has just been taken of this eminent councillor does not show him as filling the highest place in his profession; and yet if we follow him into the House of Commons, the falling off is very great indeed. There he really had no place at all; all feeling his nullity, there was no place to which he was with more visible reluctance dragged by the power that office gives the government over its lawyers. He could only obtain a hearing upon legal questions, and those he handled not with such felicity or force as repaid the attention of the listener. He seldom attempted more than to go through the references from one act of parliament to another; and though he was doing only a mechanical work, he gave out each sentence as if he had been consulted and gifted like an oracle, and looked and spoke as if when citing a section he was making a discovery. When Mr. Perceval was shot, his nerves formerly excellent, suddenly and entirely failed him; and he descended from the station of Attorney-General to that of a Puisne Judge in the Common Pleas.

Of his political prejudices, which were quite intolerant and quite sincere, mention has already been made. To the cause of reform in all its shapes and under what name soever, he was the bitter enemy. Towards all who indulged in free discussion, whether of measures or of men, he was an implacable adversary. The Press, therefore, engaged a larger share of his dislike; and under the combined influence of exasperation and alarm he filed so many *ex officio* informations in a few months, that no two attorney-generals ever in a long

course of years loaded the files of the court with as many. It was his truly painful fortune that, as most of these regarded the attacks on the Duke of York, he was compelled soon to withdraw them all; while in several of the others he was defeated; and partly by his excessive use of the power, partly by his failure in the exercise of it, he had the agony, to him most excruciating, of both being signally defeated in his attempts to crush the press, and of causing all the discussions of the *ex officio* power which first brought it into hatred and then into disuse.

This is that successful barrister, that skilful special pleader, that acute lawyer on common points, that dexterous and expert practitioner (for all this he was as certainly as he was a little-minded man)—this is he whom the men that contemn Lord Erskine, and look down upon Lord Mansfield, and would fain, if they durst, raise their small voices against Sir Samuel Romilly, hold up as the pattern of an English lawyer.

SIR WILLIAM GRANT.

If from contemplating the figure of the eminent though narrow-minded lawyer whom we have been surveying, we turn to that of his far more celebrated contemporary, Sir William Grant, we shall find, with some marked resemblances, chiefly in political opinions and exaggerated dread of change, a very marked diversity in all the more important features of character, whether intellectual or moral. We have now named in some respects the most extraordinary individual of his time—one certainly than whom none ever better sustained the judicial office, though its functions were administered by him upon a somewhat contracted scale—one than whom none ever descended from the forum into the senate with more extraordinary powers of argumentation, or flourished there with greater renown. It happened to this great judge to have been for many years at the bar with a very moderate share of practice; and although his parliamentary exertions never tore him away from his profession, yet his public character rested entirely upon their success until he was raised to the bench.

The genius of the man then shone forth with extraordinary lustre. His knowledge of law, which had hitherto been scanty and never enlarged by practice, was now expanded to whatever dimensions might seem required for performing his high office; nor was he ever remarked as at all deficient even in the branch most difficult to master without forensic habits, the accomplishments of a case-lawyer; while his familiarity with the principles of jurisprudence and his knowledge of their foundations, were ample as his application of them was easy and masterly. The Rolls Court, however, in those days, was one of comparatively contracted business; and, although he gave the most entire satisfaction there, and in presiding at the Privy Council in Prize and Plan-

tation Appeals, a doubt was always raised by the admirers of Lord Eldon, whether Sir William Grant could have as well answered the larger demands upon his judicial resources, had he presided in the Court of Chancery. That doubt appears altogether unfounded. He possessed the first great quality for despatching business (the "*real*" and not "*affected despatch*" of Lord Bacon), a power of steadily fixing his attention upon the matter before him, and keeping it invariably directed towards the successive arguments addressed to him. The certainty that not a word was lost deprived the advocate of all excuse for repetition; while the respect which his judge inspired checked needless prolixity, and deterred him from raising desperate points merely to have them frowned down by a tribunal as severe as it was patient. He had not, indeed, to apprehend any interruption—that was a course never practised in those days at the Rolls or the Cockpit; but while the judge sat passive or unmoved, it was plain that, though his powers of endurance had no limits, his powers of discriminating were ever active as his attention was ever awake; and as it required an eminent hardihood to place base coin before so scrutinizing an eye, or tender light money to be weighed in such accurate scales as Sir William Grant's; so few men ventured to exercise a patience which yet all knew to be unbounded. It may, indeed, be fairly doubted whether the main force of muscular exertion, so much more clumsily applied by Sir John Leach in the same court to effect the great object of his efforts—the close compression of the debate—ever succeeded so well, or reduced the mass to as small a bulk as the delicate hydraulic press of his illustrious predecessor did, without giving the least pain to the advocate, or in any one instance obstructing the course of calm, deliberate, and unwearied justice.

The court in those days presented a spectacle which afforded true delight to every person of sound judgment and pure taste. After a long and a silent hearing—a hearing of all that could be urged by the counsel of every party—unbroken by a single word, and when the spectator of Sir William Grant (for he was not heard)

might suppose that his mind had been absent from a scene in which he took no apparent share, the debate was closed—the advocate's hour was passed—the parties were in silent expectation of the event—the hall no longer resounded with any voice—it seemed as if the affair of the day, for the present, was over, and the Court was to adjourn or to call for another cause. No! The judge's time had now arrived, and another artist was to fill the scene. The great Magistrate began to pronounce his judgment, and every eye and every ear was at length fixed upon the bench. Forth came a strain of clear unbroken fluency, disposing alike, in most luminous order, of all the facts and of all the arguments in the cause; reducing into clear and simple arrangement, the most entangled masses of broken and conflicting statement; weighing each matter, and disposing of each in succession; settling one doubt by a parenthetical remark; passing over another difficulty by a reason only more decisive that it was condensed; and giving out the whole impression of the case, in every material view, upon the judge's mind, with argument enough to show why he so thought, and to prove him right, and without so much reasoning as to make you forget that it was a judgment you were hearing, by overstepping the bounds which distinguish a Judgment from a Speech. This is the perfection of Judicial Eloquence; not avoiding argument, but confining it to such reasoning as beseems him who has rather to explain the grounds of his own conviction, than to labour at convincing others; not rejecting reference to authority, but never betokening a disposition to seek shelter behind other men's names, for what he might fear to pronounce in his own person; not disdaining even ornaments, but those of the more chastened graces that accord with the severe standard of a judge's oratory. This perfection of judicial eloquence Sir William Grant attained, and its effect upon all listeners was as certain and as powerful as its merits were incontestable and exalted.

In Parliament he is unquestionably to be classed with speakers of the first order. His style was peculiar; it was that of the closest and severest reasoning ever

heard in any popular assembly; reasoning which would have been reckoned close in the argumentation of the bar or the dialectics of the schools. It was, from the first to the last, throughout, pure reason and the triumph of pure reason. All was sterling, all perfectly plain; there was no point in the diction, no illustration in the topics, no ornament of fancy in the accompaniments. The language was choice—perfectly clear, abundantly correct, quite concise, admirably suited to the matter which the words clothed and conveyed. In so far it was felicitous, no farther; nor did it ever leave behind it any impression of the diction, but only of the things said; the words were forgotten, for they had never drawn off the attention for a moment from the things; those things were alone remembered. No speaker was more easily listened to; none so difficult to answer. Once Mr. Fox, when he was hearing him with a view to making that attempt, was irritated in a way very unwonted to his sweet temper by the conversation of some near him, even to the show of some crossness, and (after an exclamation) sharply said, "Do you think it so very pleasant a thing to have to answer a speech like THAT?" The two memorable occasions on which this great reasoner was observed to be most injured by a reply, were in that of Mr. Wilberforce quoting Clarendon's remarks on the conduct of the judges in the Ship Money Case, when Sir William Grant had undertaken to defend his friend Lord Melville; and in that of Lord Lansdowne (then Lord Henry Petty), three years later, when the legality of the famous Orders in Council was debated. Here, however, the speech was made on one day, and the answer, able and triumphant as it was, followed on the next.

It may safely be said that a long time will elapse before there shall arise such a light to illuminate either the Senate or the Bench, as the eminent person whose rare excellence we have just been pausing to contemplate. That excellence was no doubt limited in its sphere; there was no imagination, no vehemence, no declamation, no wit; but the sphere was the highest, and in that highest sphere its place was lofty. The

understanding alone was addressed by the understanding; the faculties that distinguish our nature were those over which the oratory of Sir William Grant asserted its control. His sway over the rational and intellectual portion of mankind was that of a more powerful reason, a more vigorous intellect than theirs; a sway which no man had cause for being ashamed of admitting, because the victory was won by superior force of argument; a sway which the most dignified and exalted genius might hold without stooping from its highest pinnacle, and which some who might not deign to use inferior arts of persuasion, could find no objection whatever to exercise.

Yet in this purely intellectual picture, there remains to be noted a discrepancy, a want of keeping, a something more than a shade. The commanding intellect, the close reasoner, who could overpower other men's understanding by the superior force of his own, was the slave of his own prejudices to such an extent, that he could see only the perils of revolution in any reformation of our institutions, and never conceived it possible that the monarchy could be safe, or that anarchy could be warded off, unless all thing were maintained upon the same footing on which they stood in early unenlightened, and inexperienced ages of the world. The signal blunder which Bacon long ago exposed, of confounding the youth with the age of the species, was never committed by any one more glaringly than by this great reasoner. He it was who first employed the well-known phrase of "the wisdom of our ancestors;" and the menaced innovation, to stop which he applied it, was the proposal of Sir Samuel Romilly to take the step of reform almost imperceptibly small, of subjecting men's real property to the payment of all their debts. Strange force of early prejudice; of prejudice suffered to warp the intellect while yet feeble and uninformed, and which owed its origin to the very error that it embodied in its conclusions, the making the errors of mankind in their ignorant and inexperienced state, the guide of their conduct at their mature age, and appealing to those errors as the wisdom of past times, when they were the unripe fruit of imperfect intellectual culture!

MR. BURKE.

The contrast which Lord Mansfield presented to another school of lawyers, led us to present, somewhat out of its order, the character of Sir Vicary Gibbs as representing the latter class, and from thence we were conducted, by way of contrast (by the association, as it were, of contrariety), to view the model of a perfect judge in Sir William Grant. It is time that we now return to the group of statesmen collected round Lord North. His supporters being chiefly lawyers, we were obliged to make our incursion into Westminster Hall. When we turn to his opponents, we emerge from the learned obscurity of the black-letter precincts to the more cheerful, though not less contentious, regions of political men; and the first figure which attracts the eye is the grand form of Edmund Burke.

How much soever men may differ as to the soundness of Mr. Burke's doctrines, or the purity of his public conduct, there can be no hesitation in according to him a station among the most extraordinary persons that have ever appeared; nor is there now any diversity of opinion as to the place which it is fit to assign him. He was a writer of the first class, and excelled in almost every kind of prose composition. Possessed of most extensive knowledge, and of the most various description; acquainted alike with what different classes of men knew, each in his own province, and with much that hardly any one ever thought of learning; he could either bring his masses of information to bear directly upon the subjects to which they severally belonged—or he could avail himself of them generally to strengthen his faculties and enlarge his views—or he could turn any portion of them to account for the purpose of illustrating his theme, or enriching his diction. Hence, when he is handling any one matter, we perceive that we are conversing with a reasoner or a teacher, to whom

almost every other branch of knowledge is familiar. His views range over all the cognate subjects; his reasonings are derived from principles applicable to other matters as well as the one in hand; arguments pour in from all sides, as well as those which start up under our feet, the natural growth of the path he is leading us over; while to throw light round our steps, and either explore its darker places, or serve for our recreation, illustrations are fetched from a thousand quarters; and an imagination marvellously quick to descry unthought-of resemblances, pours forth the stores, which a lore yet more marvellous has gathered from all ages, and nations, and arts, and tongues. We are, in respect of the argument, reminded of Bacon's multifarious knowledge, and the exuberance of his learned fancy; while the many-lettered diction recalls to mind the first of English poets, and his immortal verse, rich with the spoils of all sciences and all times.

The kinds of composition are various, and he excels in them all, with the exception of two, the very highest, given but to few, and when given, almost always possessed alone,—fierce, nervous, overwhelming declamation, and close rapid argument. Every other he uses easily, abundantly, and successfully. He produced but one philosophical treatise; but no man lays down abstract principles more soundly, or better traces their application. All his works, indeed, even his controversial, are so informed with general reflection, so variegated with speculative discussion, that they wear the air of the Lyceum as well as the Academy. His narrative is excellent; and it is impossible more luminously to expose the details of a complicated subject, to give them more animation and interest, if dry in themselves, or to make them bear, by the mere power of statement, more powerfully upon the argument. In description he can hardly be surpassed, at least for effect; he has all the qualities that conduce to it—ardour of purpose, sometimes rising into violence—vivid, but too luxuriant fancy—bold, frequently extravagant, conception—the faculty of shedding over mere inanimate scenery the light imparted by moral associations. He

indulges in bitter invective, mingled with poignant wit, but descending often to abuse and even scurrility; he is apt moreover to carry an attack too far, as well as to strain the application of a principle; to slay the slain, or, dangerously for his purpose, to mingle the reader's contempt with pity.

As in the various kinds of writing, so in the different styles, he had an almost universal excellence, one only being deficient, the plain and unadorned. Not but that he could, in unfolding a doctrine or pursuing a narrative write for a little with admirable simplicity and propriety; only he could not sustain this self-denial; his brilliant imagination and well-stored memory soon broke through the restraint. But in all other styles, passages without end occur of the highest order—epigram—pathos—metaphor in profusion, chequered with more didactic and sober diction. Nor are his purely figurative passages the finest even as figured writing; he is best when the metaphor is subdued, mixed as it were with plainer matter to flavour it, and used not by itself, and for its own sake, but giving point to a more useful instrument, made of more ordinary material; or at the most, flung off by the heat of the composition, like sparks from a working engine, not fire-works for mere display. Speaking of the authors of the Declaration of Right, he calls them "those whose penetrating style has engraved in our ordinances and in our hearts, the words and spirit of that immortal law."* So, discoursing of the imitations of natural magnitude by artifice and skill—"A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods."† "When pleasure is over we relapse into indifference, or rather we fall into a soft tranquillity, which is tinged with the agreeable colour of the former sensation."‡—"Every age has its own manners, and its politics dependent on them; and the same attempts will not be made against a constitution fully

* Reflections on the French Revolution.

† Sublime and Beautiful, II. § 10.

‡ Ibid., I. § 3.

formed and matured, that were used to destroy it in the cradle or resist its growth during its infancy."*—"Faction will make its cries resound through the nation, as if the whole were in an uproar."† In works of a serious nature, upon the affairs of real life, as political discourses and orations, figurative style should hardly ever go beyond this. But strict and close metaphor or simile may be allowed, provided it be most sparingly used, and never deviate from the subject matter, so as to make that disappear in the ornament. "The judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of the imagination, (says Mr. Burke,) in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason."‡ He has here at once expressed figuratively the principles we are laying down, and illustrated our remark by the temperance of his metaphors, which, though mixed, do not offend, because they come so near mere figurative language that they may be regarded, like the last set of examples, rather as forms of expression than tropes. "A great deal of the furniture of ancient tyranny is worn to rags; the rest is entirely out of fashion"§—a most apt illustration of his important position, that we ought to be as jealous of little encroachments, now the chief sources of danger, as our ancestors were of "Ship Money" and the "Forest Laws." "A species of men, (speaking of one constant and baneful effect of grievances), to whom a state of order would become a sentence of obscurity, are nourished into a dangerous magnitude by the heat of intestine disturbances; and it is no wonder that, by a sort of sinister piety, they cherish, in return, those disorders which are the parents of all their consequence."‖—"We have not (he says of the English Church Establishment) relegated religion to obscure municipalities or rustic villages—No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments."¶ But if these should seem so temperate as

* Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents. † Ibid.
‡ Discourses on Taste.
§ Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents. ‖ Ibid.
¶ Reflections on the French Revolution.

hardly to be separate figures, the celebrated comparison of the Queen of France, though going to the verge of chaste style, hardly passes it. "And surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy."*

All his writings, but especially his later ones, abound in examples of the abuse of this style, in which, unlike those we have been dwelling upon with unmixed admiration, the subject is lost sight of, and the figure usurps its place, almost as much as in Homer's longer similes, and is oftentimes pursued, not merely with extravagance and violence, but into details that offend by their coarseness, as well as their forced connexion with the matter in question. The comparison of a noble adversary to the whale, in which the grantee of the crown is altogether forgotten, and the fish alone remains; of one Republican ruler to a cannibal in his den, where he paints him as having actually devoured a king and suffering from indigestion; of another, to a retailer of dresses, in which character the nature of constitutions is forgotten in that of millinery,—are instances too well known to be further dwelt upon, and they were the produce, not of the "audacity of youth," but of the last years of his life. It must, however, be confessed, that he was at all times somewhat apt to betray what Johnson imputes to Swift, a proneness to "revolve ideas from which other minds shrink with disgust." At least he must be allowed to have often mistaken violence and grossness for vigour. "The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preserve a galling wakefulness, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to administer the opiate portion of animosity, powdered with all the ingredients of scorn and contempt," &c.†—"They are not repelled through a fastidious delicacy at the stench of their arrogance and presumption, from a medicinal attention to their

* Reflections on the French Revolution. † Ibid.

mental blotches and running sores."*—"Those bodies, which, when full of life and beauty, lay in their arms, and were their joy and comfort, when dead and putrid, became but the more loathsome from remembrance of former endearments!"†—"The vital powers, wasted in an unequal struggle, are pushed back upon themselves, and fester, to gangrene, to death; and instead of what was but just now the delight of the creation, there will be cast out in the face of the sun, a bloated, putrid, noisome carcass, full of stench and poison, an offence, a horror, a lesson to the world."‡ Some passages are not fit to be cited, and could not now be tolerated in either house of parliament, for the indecency of their allusions—as in the Regency debates, and the attack upon lawyers on the Impeachment Continuation. But the finest of his speeches, which we have just quoted from, though it does not go so far from propriety, falls not much within its bounds. Of Mr. Dundas he says, "With six great chopping bastards, (*Reports of Secret Committee,*) each as lusty as an infant Hercules, this delicate creature blushes at the sight of his new bridegroom, assumes a virgin delicacy; or, to use a more fit, as well as more poetical comparison, the person so squeamish, so timid, so trembling, lest the winds of heaven should visit too roughly, if expanded to broad sunshine, exposed like the sow of imperial augury, lying in the mud with all the prodigies of her fertility about her, as evidence of her delicate amour."

It is another characteristic of this great writer, that the unlimited abundance of his stores makes him profuse in their expenditure. Never content with one view of a subject, or one manner of handling it, he for the most part lavishes his whole resources upon the discussion of each point. In controversy this is emphatically the case. Indeed, nothing is more remarkable than the variety of ways in which he makes his approaches to any position

* Reflections on the French Revolution.
† Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.
‡ Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.

he would master. After reconnoitring it with skill and boldness, if not with perfect accuracy, he manœuvres with infinite address, and arrays a most imposing force of general principles mustered from all parts, and pointed, sometimes violently enough, in one direction. He now moves on with the composed air, the even, dignified pace of the historian; and unfolds his facts in a narrative so easy, and yet so correct, that you plainly perceive he wanted only the dismissal of other pursuits to have rivalled Livy or Hume. But soon this advance is interrupted, and he stops to display his powers of description, when the boldness of his design is only matched by the brilliancy of its colouring. He then skirmishes for a space, and puts in motion all the lighter arms of wit; sometimes not unmingled with drollery, sometimes bordering upon farce. His main battery is now opened, and a tempest bursts forth, of every weapon of attack—invective, abuse, irony, sarcasm, simile drawn out to allegory, allusion, quotation, fable, parable, anathema. The heavy artillery of powerful declamation, and the conflict of close argument alone are wanting; but of this the garrison is not always aware; his noise is oftentimes mistaken for the thunder of true eloquence; the number of his movements distracts, and the variety of his missiles annoys the adversary; a panic spreads, and he carries his point, as if he had actually made a practicable breach; nor is it discovered till after the smoke and confusion is over, that the citadel remains untouched.

Every one of Mr. Burke's works that is of any importance, presents, though in different degrees, these features to the view; from the most chaste and temperate, his "Thoughts on the Discontents," to the least faultless and severe; his richer and more ornate, as well as vehement tracts upon revolutionary politics; his letters on the "Regicide Peace," and "Defence of his Pension." His speeches differed not at all from his pamphlets; these are written speeches, or those are spoken dissertations, according as any one is over-studious of method and closeness in a book, or of ease and nature in an oration.

The principal defects here hinted at are a serious derogation from merit of the highest order in both kinds of composition. But in his spoken eloquence, the failure which it is known attended him for a great part of his parliamentary life, is not to be explained by the mere absence of what alone he wanted to equal the greatest of orators. In fact, he was deficient in judgment; he regarded not the degree of interest felt by his audience in the topics which deeply occupied himself; and seldom knew when he had said enough on those which affected them as well as him. He was admirable in exposition; in truth, he delighted to give instruction both when speaking and conversing, and in this he was unrivalled. *Quis in sententiis argutior? in aocendo edisserendoque subtilior?* Mr. Fox might well avow, without a compliment, that he had learnt more from him alone than from all other men and authors. But if any one thing is proved by unvarying experience of popular assemblies, it is, that an excellent dissertation makes a poor speech. The speaker is not the only person actively engaged while a great oration is pronouncing; the audience have their share; they must be excited, and for this purpose constantly appealed to as recognised persons of the drama. The didactic orator (if, as has been said of the didactic poet, this be not a contradiction in terms) has it all to himself; the hearer is merely passive; and the consequence is, he soon ceases to be a listener, and if he can, even to be a spectator. Mr. Burke was essentially didactic, except when the violence of his invective carried him away, and then he offended the correct taste of the House of Commons, by going beyond the occasion, and by descending to coarseness.* When he argued, it was

* The charge of coarseness, or rather of vulgarity of language, has, to the astonishment of all who knew him, and understood pure idiomatic English, been made against Mr. Windham, but only by persons unacquainted with both. To him might nearly be applied the beautiful sketch of Crassus by M. Tullius—Quo, says he, nihil statuo fieri potuisse perfectius. Erat summa gravitas, erat cum gravitate junctus, facetiarum et urbanitatis oratorius, non scurrilis lepos. Latine loquendi acurata, et sine molestiâ diligens elegantia —in disserendo mira explicatio; cum de jure civili, cum de æquo

by unfolding large views, and seizing upon analogies too remote, and drawing distinctions "too fine for his hearers," or, at the best, by a body of statements, lucid, certainly, and diversified with flower and fruit, and lighted up with pleasantry, but almost always in excess, and overdone in these qualities as well as its own substance. He had little power of hard stringent reasoning, as has been already remarked; and his declamation was addressed to the head, as from the head it proceeded, learned, fanciful, ingenious, but not impassioned. Of him, as a combatant, we may say what Aristotle did of the old philosophers, when he compared them to unskilful boxers, who hit round about, and not straight forward, and fight with little effect, though they may by chance sometimes deal a hard blow.—Οιον εν ταις μαχαις οι αγυμναστοι ποιουσι. και γαρ εκεινοι περιφερουμενοι τυπτουσι πολλακις καλας αλλ' ουτ' εκεινοι απ' επιστημης.—(*Metaphys.*)*

Cicero has somewhere called Eloquence *copiose loquens sapientia*. This may be true of written, but of spoken eloquence it is a defective definition, and will, at the best, only comprehend the Demonstrative (or Epideictic) kind, which is banished, for want of an audience, from all modern assemblies of a secular description. Thus, though it well characterizes Mr. Burke, yet the defects which we have pointed out were fatal to his success. Accordingly the test of eloquence, which the same master has in so picturesque a manner given, from his own constant experience, here entirely failed,

et bono disputaretur argumentorum et similitudinum copia. Let not the reader reject even the latter features, those certainly of an advocate; at least let him first read Mr. Windham's Speech on the Law of Evidence, in the Duke of York's case.

* The Attic reader will be here reminded of the First Philippic, in which a very remarkable passage, and in part too applicable to our subject, seems to have been suggested by the passage in the text; and its great felicity both of apt comparison and of wit, should, with many other passages, have made critics pause before they denied those qualities to the chief of orators. Ωσπερ δε οι βαρβαροι πυκτευουσιν, ουτω πολεμειτε Φιλιππω: και γαρ εκεινον ὁ πληγεις αει της πληγης εχεται, καν ετερωσε παταξη τις, εκεισε εισιν αι χειρες. προβαλλεσθαι δ', η βλεπειν εναντιον ουτ' οιδεν, ουτ' εθελει—which he proceeds to illustrate by the conduct held respecting the Chersonese and Thermopylæ.

"Volo hoc oratori contingat, ut cum auditum sit eum esse dicturum, locus in subselliis occupetur, compleatur tribunal, gratiosi scribæ sint in dando et cedendo locum, corona multiplex, judex erectus; cum surgit is, qui dicturus sit, significetur a corona silentium, deinde crebræ assensiones, multæ admirationes: risus, cum velit; cum velit, fletus; ut, qui hæc procul videat, etiamsi quid agatur nesciat, at placere tamen, et in scena Roscium intelligat." For many years, that is, between the latter part of the American war, and the speeches which he made, neither many nor long, nor in a very usual or regular style, on the French Revolution, the very reverse of all this was to be seen and lamented, as often as Mr. Burke spoke. The spectator saw no signs of Roscius being in action, but rather of the eminent civilian so closely allied by Mr. Burke, and of whom we are hereafter to speak.* "Videt," (as the same critic has, in another passage, almost to the letter described it,) "oscitantem judicem, loquentum cum altero, nonnunquam etiam circulantem, mittentem ad horas; quæsitorem, ut dimittat, rogantem;† intelligit, oratorem in ea causa non adesse, qui possit animis judicum admovere orationem, tanquam fidibus manum."

But it may justly be said, with the second of Attic orators, that sense is always more important than eloquence; and no one can doubt that enlightened men in all ages will hang over the works of Mr. Burke, and dwell with delight even upon the speeches that failed to command the attention of those to whom they were addressed. Nor is it by their rhetorical beauties that they interest us. The extraordinary depth of his detached views, the penetrating sagacity which he occasionally applies to the affairs of men and their motives, and the curious felicity of expression with which he unfolds principles, and traces resemblances and relations, are separately the gift of few, and in their union probably without any example. This must be admitted on all hands; it

* Dr. Lawrence.

† This desire in the English senate is irregularly signified, by the cries of "Question," there not being a proper quarter to appeal to, as in the Roman courts.

is possibly the last of these observations which will obtain universal assent, as it is the last we have to offer before coming upon disputed ground, where the fierce contentions of politicians cross the more quiet path of the critic.

Not content with the praise of his philosophic acuteness, which all are ready to allow, the less temperate admirers of this great writer have ascribed to him a gift of genius approaching to the power of divination, and have recognised him as in possession of a judgment so acute and so calm withal, that its decision might claim the authority of infallible decrees. His opinions upon French affairs have been viewed as always resulting from general principles deliberately applied to each emergency; and they have been looked upon as forming a connected system of doctrines, by which his own sentiments and conduct were regulated, and from which after times may derive the lessons of practical wisdom.

A consideration which at once occurs, as casting suspicion upon the soundness, if not also upon the sincerity, of these encomiums, is, that they never were dreamt of until the questions arose concerning the French Revolution; and yet, if well founded, they were due to the former principles and conduct of their object; for it is wholly inconsistent with their tenor to admit that the doctrines so extolled were the rank and sudden growth of the heats which the changes of 1789 had generated. Their title to so much admiration and to our implicit confidence must depend upon their being the slowly matured fruit of a profound philosophy, which had investigated and compared; pursuing the analogies of things, and tracing events to their remote origin in the principles of human nature. Yet it is certain that these reasoners (if reasoning can indeed be deemed their vocation) never discovered a single merit in Mr. Burke's opinions, or anything to praise, or even to endure, in his conduct, from his entrance into public life in 1765 to the period of that stormy confusion of all parties and all political attachments which took place in 1791, a short time before he quitted it. They are therefore placed in a dilemma, from which it would puzzle subtler dialecti-

cians to escape. Either they or their idol have changed; either they have received a new light, or he is a changeling god. They are either converts to a faith which, for so many years and during so many vicissitudes, they had, in their preaching and in their lives, held to be damnable; or they are believers in a heresy, lightly taken up by its author, and promulgated to suit the wholly secular purposes of some particular season.

We believe a very little examination of the facts will suffice to show that the believers have been more consistent than their oracle; and that they escape from the charge of fickleness at the expense of the authority due to the faith last proclaimed from his altar. It would, indeed be difficult to select one leading principle or prevailing sentiment in Mr. Burke's latest writings, to which something extremely adverse may not be found in his former, we can hardly say his early works; excepting only on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, to which, with all the friends of Lord Rockingham, he was from the beginning adverse; and in favour of which he found so very hesitating and lukewarm a feeling among Mr. Fox's supporters, as hardly amounted to a difference, certainly offered no inducements to compromise the opinions of his own party. Searching after the monuments of altered principles, we will not resort to his first works, in one of which he terms Damien "a late unfortunate regicide," looking only at his punishment, and disregarding his offence; neither shall we look into his speeches, exceeding, as they did, the bounds which all other men, even in the heat of debate, prescribe to themselves, in speaking now of the first magistrate of the country, while labouring under a calamitous visitation of Providence—now of kings generally. But we may fairly take as the standard of his opinions, best weighed and most deliberately pronounced, the calmest of all his productions, and the most fully considered,—given to the world when he had long passed the middle age of life, had filled a high station, and been for years eminent in parliamentary history.* Although, in compositions of

* The Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents was published in 1770—when Mr. Burke was above 40 years old.

this kind, more depends upon the general tone of a work than on particular passages, because the temper of mind on certain points may be better gathered from that, than from any expressly stated propositions, yet we have but to open the book to see that his *Thoughts* in 1770, were very different from those which breathe through every page of his Anti-Jacobin writings. And first of the Corinthian Capital of 1790—"I am no friend" (says he in 1770) "to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the constitution, I should be free to declare, that if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form, than lost in that austere and insolent domination." (*Works*, II. 246.) His comfort is derived from the consideration, "that the generality of peers are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their proper dignity, and run headlong into an abject servitude." Next of "the Swinish Multitude"—"When popular discontents have been very prevalent it may well be affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, not their crime. But with the governing part of the state it is far otherwise;" and he quotes the saying of Sully: "Pour la populace, ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir." (*Ib.* 224.) Again, of the people as "having nothing to do with the laws but to obey them"—"I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives, but *the interposition of the body of the people itself,** whenever it shall appear by some flagrant and notorious act,—by some capital innovation—that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law, and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy. But if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be used; to be used then only when it is

* Ital. in orig.

evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles. It is not in Parliament alone that the remedy for parliamentary disorders can be completed; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for judging more systematically upon their conduct ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured." (*Ib.* 324.) The reasons which called for popular interposition, and made him preach it at a season of unprecedented popular excitement, are stated to be "the immense revenue, enormous debt, and mighty establishments;" and he requires the House of Commons "to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large;" adding, that, "it would be a more natural and tolerable evil, that the House should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors." Now let us step aside for a moment to remark, that the "*immense revenue*" was under 10 millions; the "*enormous debt,*" 130; and the "*mighty establishments,*" cost about 6 millions a-year. The statesman who, on this account, recommended popular interference in 1770, lived to see the revenue 24 millions; the debt, 350; the establishment, 30; and the ruling principle of his latter days was the all-sufficiency of Parliament and the Crown, and the fatal consequence of according to the people the slightest share of direct power in the state.

His theoretical view of the constitution in those days, was as different from the high monarchical tone of his later writings. The King was then "the representative of the people,"—"so," (he adds) "are the Lords; so are the Judges; they are all trustees for the people, as well as the Commons, because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and although government

certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people." And then comes that immortal passage so often cited, and which ought to be blazoned in letters of fire over the porch of the Commons House; illustrating the doctrine it sets out with, that "their representatives are a control *for* the people, and not *upon* the people: and that the virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation." (*Ib.* 288.)* It may be superfluous to add, that one so deeply imbued with the soundest principles of a free constitution, must always have regarded the Bourbon rulers with singular dislike, while we saw in the English government the natural ally of Liberty, wheresoever she was struggling with her chains. Accordingly, in the same famous work, he exclaims, "Such was the conquest of Corsica, by the professed enemies of the freedom of mankind, in defiance of those who were formerly its professed defenders."—(*Ibid.* 272.)

Although it cannot be denied that a considerable portion of the deference which Mr. Burke's later and more celebrated opinions are entitled to command is thus taken away, and, as it were, shared by the conflicting authority of his earlier sentiments, his disciples may, nevertheless, be willing to rest his claims to a reverent, if not an implicit observance upon the last, as the ma-

* "A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy; an anxious care of public money; an openness approaching towards facility, to public complaint; these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons and a petitioning nation; a House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair; in the utmost harmony with ministers whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account; who in all disputes between the people and the administration, pronounce against the people; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in the constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate; but it is not to any popular purpose a House of Commons."—(*Ib.* 289.)

turest efforts of his genius. Now, it appears evident that in this extraordinary person, the usual progress of the faculties in growth and decline was in some measure reversed; his fancy became more vivid,—it burnt, as it were, brighter before its extinction; while age, which had only increased that light, lessened the power of profiting from it, by weakening the judgment as the imagination gained luxuriance and strength. Thus, his old age resembled that of other men in one particular only; he was more haunted by fears, and more easily became the dupe of imposture as well as alarm.

It is quite vain now to deny, that the unfavourable decision which those feelings led him to form of the French Revolution, was, in the main, incorrect, and exaggerated. That he was right in expecting much confusion and mischief from the passions of a whole nation let loose, and influenced only by the various mobs of its capital, literary and political, in the assemblies, the club-rooms, the theatre and the streets, no one can doubt; and his apprehensions were certainly not shared by the body of his party. But beyond this very scanty and not very difficult portion of his predictions, it would be hard to show any signal instance of their fulfilment. Except in lamenting the excesses of the times of terror, and in admitting them to form a large deduction from the estimate of the benefits of the Revolution, it would be no easy matter to point out a single opinion of his which any rational and moderate man of the present day will avow. Those who claim for Mr. Burke's doctrines in 1790 the praise of a sagacity and foresight hardly human, would do well to recollect his speech on the Army Estimates of that year. It is published by himself, corrected,* and its drift is to show the uselessness of a large force, because "France must now be considered as expunged out of the system of Europe;" it expresses much doubt if she can ever resume her station "as a leading power;" anticipates the language of the rising generation—*Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus;* and decides that, at all

* Works, vol. v., p. 1.

events, her restoration to any thing like a substantive existence, must, under a republic, be the work of much time. Scarce two years elapsed before this same France, without any change whatever in her situation, except the increase of the anarchy that had expunged her from the map, declared war on Austria, and in a few months more carried her conquests so much farther than Louis XIV. had done, when the firmness and judgment of King William opposed him, that Mr. Burke now said a universal league was necessary to avert her universal dominion, and that it was a question whether she would suffer any one throne to stand in Europe. The same eulogists of Mr. Burke's sagacity would also do well to recollect those yearly predictions of the complete internal ruin which for so long a period alternated with alarms at the foreign aggrandisement of the Republic; they all originated in his famous work—though it contains some prophecies too extravagant to be borrowed by his most servile imitators. Thus he contends that the population of France is irreparably diminished by the Revolution, and actually adopts a calculation which makes the distress of Paris require above two millions sterling for its yearly relief; a sum sufficient to pay each family above seventeen pounds, or to defray its whole expenditure in that country.

But on these grounds a further allowance is made, and a new deduction introduced, from the sum total of the deference paid to his authority. It is said that the sagacity and penetration which we are bid to reverence were never at fault, unless on points where strong feelings interfered. The proposition must be admitted, and without any qualification. But it leads not to an abatement merely—it operates a release of the whole debt of deference and respect. For one clever man's opinion is just as good as another's, if both are equally uninfluenced by passions and feelings of every kind. Nor must it be forgotten that on another subject as well as the French Revolution Mr. Burke's prejudices warped his judgment. When strongly interested he was apt to regard things in false colours and distorted shape. The fate of society for many years hung upon Hastings's

Impeachment: during that period he exhausted as much vituperation upon the East Indians in this country as he afterwards did on the Jacobins; and he was not more ready to quarrel with Mr. Fox on a difference of opinion about France, than he had been a year before to attack Mr. Erskine with every weapon of personal and professional abuse, upon a slighter difference about the Abating of the Impeachment. Nay, after the Hastings question might have been supposed forgotten, or merged in the more recent controversy on French affairs, he deliberately enumerates among the causes of alarm at French principles, the prevalence of the East India interest in England; ranks "Nabobs" with the Diplomatic Body all over Europe, as naturally and incurably Jacobin; and warns this country loudly and solemnly against suffering itself to be overthrown by a "Bengal Junto."

The like infirmity of a judgment weakened, no doubt, by his temper, pursued him in his later years through the whole details of the question that excited him most, when France was the master topic. He is blinded to the impressions on his very senses, not by the "light shining inward," but by the heat of his passions. He sees not what all other men behold, but what he wishes to see, or what his prejudices and fantasies suggest; and having once pronounced a dogma, the most astounding contradictions that events can give him assail his mind, and even his senses, in vain. Early in 1790 he pronounced France extinguished, as regarded her external force. But at the end of 1793, when the second attempt to invade her had ended in the utter discomfiture of the assailants, when she was rioting in the successes of an offensive war, and had armed her whole people to threaten the liberties of Europe, he still sees in her situation nothing but "complete ruin, without the chance of resurrection," and still reckons that, when she recovers her nominal existence by a restoration of the monarchy, "it will be as much as all her neighbours can do by a steady guarantee, to keep her upon her basis."* (Works,

* She had at that time 750,000 men under arms, without calling out the second conscription.

VII. 185.) That he should confound all persons, as well as things, in his extravagant speculations, surprises less than such delusions as this. We are little astonished at finding him repeatedly class the humane and chivalrous La Fayette with the monster Robespierre; but when we find him pursuing his theory, that all Atheists are Jacobins, so far as to charge Hume with being a leveller, and pressing the converse of the proposition so far as to insinuate that Priestley was an Atheist, we pause incredulous over the sad devastation which a disordered fancy can make in the finest understanding. (VII. 58.)

That the warlike policy which he recommended against France, was more consistent than the course pursued by the ministry, may be admitted. The weak and ruinous plan of leaving the enemy to conquer all Europe, while we wasted our treasures and our blood in taking Sugar Islands, to increase the African slave trade, and mow down whole armies by pestilence, has been oftentimes painted in strong colours, never stronger than the truth; and our arms only were successful when this wretched system was abandoned. But if Mr. Burke faintly and darkly arraigned this plan of operations, it was on grounds so purely fanciful, and he dashed the truth with such a mixture of manifest error, that he unavoidably both prevented his counsels from being respected, and subjected his own policy to imputations full as serious as those he brought against the government. He highly approved of the Emigration, because France was no longer in but out of France; he insisted on an invasion, for the avowed purpose of restoring monarchy and punishing its enemies; he required the advanced guard of the attacking army to be composed of the bands of French gentlemen, emigrants, and to be accompanied by the exiled priests; and, in order to make the movement more popular, they were to be preceded by the proclamation of solemn leagues among the allies, never to treat with a republic that had slain its king, and formal announcements that they entered the country to punish as well as to restore.

Mr. Burke lived not to see the power of the revolutionary government extend itself resistless in the

direction he had pronounced impossible, or prove harmless in the only way he deemed it formidable. The downfall of that government he lived not to see thrice accomplished, without one of his plans being followed. Yet let us not doubt his opinions upon the restoration of his favourite dynasty, had he survived its exile. With all his bright genius and solid learning, his venerable name would have been found at the head, or rather say in advance, of the most universally and most justly contemned faction in the world. The "Ultras" would have owned him for their leader, and would have admitted that he went beyond them in the uncompromising consistency of his extravagant dogmas. He who had deemed the kind of punishments that should be meted out, the most important point to settle previously, and had thought it necessary, in many a long and laboured page to discuss this when the prospects of the Bourbons were desperate (VII. 187), and to guard them by all arguments against listening to plans of amnesty, would have objected vehemently to every one act of the restored government; regarded the *charter* as an act of abdication; the security of property as robbery and sacrilege; the impunity of the Jacobins, as making the monarch an accessary after the fact to his brother's murder; and what all men of sound minds regarded as a state of great improvement, blessing the country with much happiness, freeing it from many abuses, and giving it precious hopes of liberty, he would have pronounced the height of misery and degradation. If such had not proved to be his views, living in our times, he must have changed all the opinions which he professed up to the hour of his death.

Upon one subject alone could he have been found ranged with the Liberal party of the present day; he always, from a very early period, and before sound principles were disseminated on questions of political economy, held the most enlightened opinions on all subjects of mercantile policy; and these sound opinions he retained to the last; here his mind seemed warped by no bias, and his profound understanding and habits of observation kept him right. His works abound with just

and original reflections upon these matters, and they form a striking contrast to the narrow views which, in his latter years, he was prone to take of all that touched the interests and the improvement of mankind. For his whole habits of thinking seemed perverted by the dread of change; and he never reflected, except in the single case of the Irish Catholics, that the surest way of bringing about a violent revolution is to resist a peaceful reform.

As he dreaded all plans of amendment which sought to work by perceivable agency and within a moderate compass of time, so he distrusted all who patronised them—asserting their conduct to be wild and visionary enthusiasm at the best, but generally imputing their zeal to some sinister motives of personal interest: most unjustly—most unphilosophically—most unthinkingly. It is the natural tendency of man connected with the upper ranks of society, and separated from the mass of the community, to undervalue things which only affect the rights or the interests of the people. Against this leaning to which he had yielded, it becomes them to struggle, and their honest devotion to the cause of peaceable improvement, their virtuous labours bestowed in advancing the dignity and happiness of their fellow-creatures, their perils and their losses encountered in defence of the rights of oppressed men, are the most glorious titles to the veneration of the good and the wise; but they are titles which he would have scornfully rejected, or covered with the title of his indignant sarcasm, whom Providence had endowed with such rare parts, and originally imbued with such love of liberty, that he seemed especially raised up as an instrument for instructing and mending his kind.

Of Mr. Burke's genius as a writer and an orator we have now spoken at great, though not needless length; and it would not have been necessary to dwell longer on the subject, but for a sketch of a very different kind lately drawn by another hand, from which a more accurate resemblance might have been expected. That Mr. Burke, with extraordinary powers of mind, cultivated to a wonderful degree, was a person of eccentric

nature; that he was one mixture of incongruous extremes; that his opinions were always found to be on the outermost verge of those which could be held upon any question; that he was wholly wild and impracticable in his views; that he knew not what moderation or modification was in any doctrine which he advanced; but was utterly extravagant in whatever judgment he formed, and whatever sentiment he expressed;—such was the representation to which we have alluded, and which, considering the distinguished quarter it proceeded from,* seems to justify some further remark; the rather, because we have already admitted the faults to exist in one portion of his opinions, which are now attempted to be affirmed respecting the whole. Without being followers of Mr. Burke's political principles, or indiscriminate admirers of his course as a statesman;—the capacity in which he the least shone especially during the few latter and broken years of his illustrious, checkered, and care-worn life, we may yet affirm that, with the exception of his writings upon the French Revolution—an exception itself to be qualified and restricted—it would be difficult to find any statesman of any age whose opinions were more habitually marked by moderation; by a constant regard to the results of actual experience, as well as the dictates of an enlarged reason; by a fixed determination always to be practical, at the time he was giving scope to the most extensive general views; by a cautious and prudent abstinence from all extremes, and especially from those towards which the general complexion of his political principles tending, he felt the more necessary for being on his guard against the seduction.

This was the distinguishing feature of his policy through life. A brilliant fancy and rich learning did not more characterize his discourse, than this moderation did his counsels. Imagination did not more inspire, or deep reflection inform his eloquence, than a wise spirit of compromise between theory and practice,—between all opposing extremes,—governed his choice of measures.

* Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords, July, 1838.

This was by the extremes of both parties, but more especially of his own, greatly complained of; they could not always comprehend it, and they could never relish it, because their own understanding and information reached it not; and the selfish views of their meaner nature were thwarted by it. In his speeches, by the length at which he dwelt on topics, and the vehemence of his expressions, he was often deficient in judgment. But in the formation of his opinions no such defect could be perceived; he well and warily propounded all practical considerations; and although he viewed many subjects in different lights at the earlier and the later periods of his time, and is thus often quoted for opposite purposes by reasoners on different sides of the great political controversy, he himself never indulged in wild or thoughtless extremes. He brought this spirit of moderation into public affairs with him: and, if we except the very end of his life, when he had ceased to live much in public, it stuck by him to the last. "I pitched my Whiggism low," said he, "that I might keep by it." With his own followers his influence was supreme: and over such men as Dr. Lawrence, Mr. W. Elliott, and the late Lord Minto, to say nothing of the Ellises, the Freres and the Cannings, no man of immoderate and extreme opinions ever could have retained this sway. Mr. Wilberforce compares their deference for him with the treatment of Ahitophel. "It was as if one meant to inquire of the oracle of the Lord."* Hear again the words of one who knew him well, for he had studied him much, and had been engaged in strenuous controversy against him. Speaking of the effects produced by his strong opinions respecting French affairs, Sir James Mackintosh, as justly as profoundly observed to Mr. Horner—"So great is the effect of a single inconsistency with the whole course of a long and wise political life, that the *greatest philosopher in practice* whom the world ever saw, passes with the superficial vulgar for a hot-brained enthusiast." Sir James Mackintosh never dreamt that all the temperate wisdom of the orations upon American affairs—

* Life of Wilberforce, vol. ii., p. 211.

all the profound and practical discretion which breathes over each page of the discussion upon the "Present Discontents"—all the truly enlarged principles of retrenchment, but tempered with the soundest and most rational views of each proposition's bearing upon the whole frame of our complicated government, which has made the celebrated speech upon "Economical Reform" the manual of every moderate and constitutional reformer—all the careful regard for facts, as well as abstract principles, the nice weighing of opposite arguments, the acute perception of practical consequences, which presided over his whole opinions upon commercial policy especially on the questions connected with Scarcity and the Corn Laws—all the mingled firmness, humanity, soundness of practical judgment, and enlargement of speculative views, which governed his opinions upon the execution of the Criminal Law—all the spirit of reform and toleration, tempered with cautious circumspection of surrounding connexions, and provident foresight of possible consequences, which marked and moved his wise and liberal advice upon the affairs of the Irish hierarchy—that all would have been forgotten in the perusal of a few violent invectives, or exaggerated sentiments, called forth by the horrors of the French Revolution; which, as his unrivalled sagacity had foreseen them, when the rest of his party, intoxicated with the victory over despotism, could not even look towards any consequences at all; so he not very unnaturally regarded as the end and consummation of that mighty event,—mistaking the turbulence by which the tempest and the flood were to clear the stream, for the perennial defilement of its waters.

Nor, though we have shown the repugnance of his earlier to his later opinions, must it after all be set down to the account of a heated imagination and an unsound judgment, that even upon the French Revolution he betrayed so much violence in his language, and carried his opinions to a length which all men now deem extravagant; or that he at one time was so misled by the appearances of the hour as to dread the effacing of France from the map of Eu-

rope. We are now filling the safe and easy chair of him who judges after the event, and appeals to things as certainly known, which the veil of futurity concealed from them that went before. Every one must allow that the change which shook France to her centre, and fixed the gaze of mankind, was an event of prodigious magnitude; and that he who was called to form an opinion upon its import, and to foretell its consequences, and to shape his counsels upon the conduct to be pursued regarding it, was placed in circumstances wholly new: and had to grope his way without any light whatever from the experience of past times. Mr. Burke could only see mischief in it, view it on whatever side or from whatever point he would; and he regarded the consequences as pregnant with danger to all other countries, as well as to the one which he saw laid waste or about to be devastated by its progress. That for a time he saw right, no one now can affect to deny. When all else in this country could foresee nothing but good to France, from the great improvement so suddenly wrought in her institutions, he plainly told them that what they were pleased with viewing as the lambent flame of a fire-work was the glare of a volcanic explosion which would cover France and Europe with the ruins of all their institutions, and fill the air with Cimmerian darkness, through the confusion of which neither the useful light of day nor the cheering prospect of heaven could be descried. The suddenness of the improvement which delighted all else, to his sagacious and far-sighted eye, aided, doubtless, by the reflecting glass of past experience, and strengthened by the wisdom of other days in which it had been steeped, presented the very cause of distrust and foreboding and alarm. It was *because* his habit of mind was cautious and calculating,—not easily led away by a fair outside, not apt to run into extremes, given to sober reflection, and fond of correcting, by practical views, and by the lessons of actual observation, the plausible suggestions of the theory,—that he beheld, with doubt, and apprehension, Governments pulled down and set up in a day—Constitutions, the

slow work of centuries, taken to pieces and re-constructed like an eight-day clock. He is not without materials, were he to retort the charge of easily running into extremes, and knowing not where to stop, upon those who were instantly fascinated with the work of 1789, and could not look forward to the consequences of letting loose four-and-twenty millions of people from the control under which ages of submission to arbitrary rule and total disuse of civil rights had kept them. *They* are assuredly without the means of demonstrating *his* want of reflection and foresight. For nearly the whole period during which he survived the commencement of the Revolution,—for five of those seven years,—all his predictions, save one momentary expression, had been more than fulfilled; anarchy and bloodshed had borne sway in France; conquest and convulsion had desolated Europe; and even when he closed his eyes upon earthly prospects, he left this portentous meteor "with fear of change perplexing monarchs." The providence of mortals is not often able to penetrate so far as this into futurity. Nor can he whose mind was filled with such well-grounded alarms be justly impeached of violence, and held up as unsoundly given to extremes of opinion, if he betrayed an invincible repugnance to sudden revolutions in the systems of policy by which nations are governed, and an earnest desire to see the restoration of the old state of things in France, as the harbinger of repose for the rest of the world.

That Mr. Burke did, however, err, and err widely in the estimate which he formed of the merits of a Restored Government, no one now can doubt. His mistake was in comparing the old *regime* with the anarchy of the Revolution; to which not only the monarchy of France, but the despotism of Turkey was preferable. He never could get rid of the belief that because the change had been effected with a violence which it produced, and inevitably produced the consequences foreseen by himself, and by him alone, therefore the tree so planted must forever prove incapable of bearing good fruit. He forgot that after the violence, in its nature temporary, should

subside, it might be both quite impossible to restore the old monarchy, and very possible to form a new, and orderly, and profitable government upon the ruins of the Republic. Above all, he had seen so much present mischief wrought to France during the convulsive struggle which was not over before his death, that he could not persuade himself of any possible good arising to her from the mighty change she had undergone. All this we now see clearly enough; having survived Mr. Burke forty years, and witnessed events which the hardiest dealers in prophecies assuredly could never have ventured to foretell. But we who were so blind to the early consequences of the Revolution, and who really did suffer ourselves to be carried away by extreme opinions, deaf to all Mr. Burke's warnings; we surely have little right to charge him with blind violence, unreflecting devotion to his fancy, and a disposition to run into extremes. At one time they who opposed his views were by many, perhaps by the majority of men, accused of this propensity. After the events in France had begun to affright the people of this country, when Mr. Burke's opinions were found to have been well grounded, the friends of liberty would not give up their fond belief that all must soon come right. At that time we find Dean Milner writing to Mr. Wilberforce from Cambridge, that "Mr. Fox's old friends there all gave him up, and most of them said he was mad."*

In the imperfect estimate of this great man's character and genius which we have now concluded, let it not be thought that we have made any very large exceptions to the praise unquestionably his due. We have only abated claims preferred by his unheeding worshippers to more

* *Life of Wilberforce*, II. p. 3.—This was written early in the year 1793, when most men thought Mr. Burke both moderate and right. "There is scarce one of his (Mr. Fox's) old friends here at Cambridge who is not disposed to give him up, and most say he is mad. I think of him much as I always did; I still doubt whether he has bad principles, but I think it pretty plain he has none; and I suppose he is ready for whatever turns up." See, too, Lord Wellesley's justly celebrated speech, two years later, on French affairs. It is republished in Mr. Martin's edition of that great statesman's Despatches.

than mortal endowments—worshippers who with the true fanatical spirit adore their idol the more, as he proves the more unsafe guide; and who chiefly valued his peculiarities, when he happened to err on the great question that filled the later years of his life. Enough will remain to command our admiration, after it shall be admitted that he who possessed the finest fancy, and the rarest knowledge, did not equally excel other men in retaining his sound and calm judgment at a season of peculiar emergency; enough to excite our wonder at the degree in which he was gifted with most parts of genius, though our credulity be not staggered by the assertion of a miraculous union of them all. We have been contemplating a great marvel certainly, not gazing on a supernatural sight; and we retire from it with a belief, that if acuteness, learning, imagination, so unmeasured, were never before combined, yet have there been occasionally witnessed in eminent men greater powers of close reasoning and fervid declamation, oftentimes a more correct taste, and on the question to which his mind was last and most earnestly applied, a safer judgment.

MR. FOX.

The glory of Mr. Burke's career certainly was the American war, during which he led the Opposition in the House of Commons: until, having formed a successor more renowned than himself, he was succeeded rather than superseded in the command of that victorious band of the champions of freedom. This disciple, as he was proud to acknowledge himself, was Charles James Fox, one of the greatest statesmen, and if not the greatest orator, certainly the most accomplished debater, that ever appeared upon the theatre of public affairs in any age of the world. To the profuse, the various learning of his master; to his exuberant fancy, to his profound and mature philosophy he had no pretensions. His knowledge was confined to the ordinary accomplishments of an English education—intimate acquaintance with the classics; the exquisite taste which that familiarity bestows; and a sufficient knowledge of history. These stores he afterwards increased rather than diminished; for he continued to delight in classical reading; and added a minute and profound knowledge of modern languages, with a deep and accurate study of our own history, and the history of other modern states; insomuch, that it may be questioned, if any politician in any age ever knew so thoroughly the various interests, and the exact position of all the countries with which his own had dealings to conduct or relations to maintain. Beyond these solid foundations of oratory, and ample stores of political information, his range did not extend. Of natural science, of metaphysical philosophy, of political economy, he had not even the rudiments; and he was apt to treat those matters with the neglect, if not the contempt, which ignorance can rather account for than excuse. He had come far too early into public life to be well grounded in a statesman's philosophy; like his great rival, and

indeed like most aristocratic politicians, who were described as "rocked and dandled into legislators" by one* himself exempt from this defective education; and his becoming a warm partisan at the same early age, also laid the foundation of another defect, the making party principle the only rule of conduct, and viewing every truth of political science through this distorting and discolouring medium.

But if such were the defects of his education, the mighty powers of his nature often overcame them, always threw them into the shade. A preternatural quickness of apprehension, which enabled him to see at a glance what cost other minds the labour of an investigation, made all attainments of an ordinary kind so easy, that it perhaps disinclined him to those which not even his acuteness and strength of mind could master without the pain of study. But he was sure as well as quick; and where the heat of passion, or the prejudice of party, or certain little peculiarities of a personal kind, —certain mental idiosyncrasies in which he indulged, and which produced capricious fancies or crotchets, —left his faculties unclouded and unstunted, no man's judgment was more sound, or could more safely be trusted. Then, his feelings were warm and kindly; his temper was sweet though vehement; like that of all the Fox family, his nature was generous, open, manly; above everything like dissimulation or duplicity; governed by the impulses of a great and benevolent soul. This virtue, so much beyond all intellectual graces, yet bestowed its accustomed influence upon the faculties of his understanding, and gave them a reach of enlargement to which meaner natures are ever strangers. It was not more certain that such a mind as his should be friendly to religious toleration, eager for the assertion of civil liberty, the uncompromising enemy of craft and cruelty in all their forms,—from the corruption of the Treasury and the severity of the penal code, up to the oppression of our American colonies and the African slave-traffic,—than that it

* Mr. Burke.

should be enlarged and strengthened, made powerful in its grasp and consistent in its purpose, by the same admirable and amiable qualities which bent it always towards the right pursuit.

The great intellectual gifts of Mr. Fox, the robust structure of his faculties, naturally governed his oratory, made him singularly affect argument, and led him to a close grappling with every subject; despising all flights of imagination, and shunning everything collateral or discursive. This turn of mind, too, made him always careless of ornament, often negligent of accurate diction. There never was a greater mistake, as has already been remarked,* than the fancying a close resemblance between his eloquence and that of Demosthenes; although an excellent judge (Sir James Mackintosh) fell into it when he pronounced him "the most Demosthenean speaker since Demosthenes." That he resembled his immortal predecessor in despising all useless ornament, and all declamation for declamation's sake, is true enough; but it applies to every good speaker as well as to those two signal ornaments of ancient and modern rhetoric. That he resembled him in keeping more close to the subject in hand, than many good and even great speakers have often done, may also be affirmed; yet this is far too vague and remote a likeness to justify the proposition in question; and it is only a difference in degree, and not a specific distinction between him and others. That his eloquence was fervid, rapid, copious, carrying along with it the minds of the audience, nor suffering them to dwell upon the speaker or the speech, but engrossing their whole attention, and keeping it fixed on the question, is equally certain, and is the only real resemblance which the comparison affords. But then the points of difference are as numerous as they are important, and they strike indeed upon the most cursory glance. The one was full of repetitions, recurring again and again to the same topic, nay, to the same view of it, till he had made his impression complete; the other never came back upon a ground which he had

* Lord Chatham.

utterly wasted and withered up by the tide of fire he had rolled over it. The one dwelt at length, and with many words on his topics; the other performed the whole at a blow, sometimes with a word, always with the smallest number of words possible. The one frequently was digressive, even narrative and copious in illustration; in the other no deviation from his course was ever to be perceived; no disporting on the borders of his way, more than any lingering upon it; but carried rapidly forward, and without swerving to the right or to the left, like the engines flying along a railway, and like them driving everything out of sight that obstructed his resistless course. In diction as well as in thought the contrast was alike remarkable. It is singular that any one should have thought of likening Mr. Fox to the orator of whom the great Roman critic, comparing him with Cicero, has said so well and so judiciously—*In illo plus curæ, in hoc plus naturæ.* The Greek was, of all speakers, the one who most carefully prepared each sentence; showing himself as sedulous in the collocation of his words as in the selection. His composition, accordingly, is a model of the most artificial workmanship; yet of an art so happy in its results that itself is wholly concealed. The Englishman was negligent, careless, slovenly beyond most speakers; even his most brilliant passages were the inspirations of the moment; and he frequently spoke for half an hour at a time, sometimes delivered whole speeches, without being fluent for five minutes, or, excepting in a few sound and sensible remarks which were interspersed, rewarding the hearer with a single redeeming passage. Indeed, to the last, he never possessed, unless when much animated, any great fluency; and probably despised it, as he well might, if he only regarded its effects in making men neglect more essential qualities,—when the curse of being *fluent speakers*, and nothing else, has fallen on them and on their audience. Nevertheless, that fluency—the being able easily to express his thoughts in correct words—is as essential to a speaker as drawing to a painter. This we cannot doubt, any more than we can refuse our assent to the proposition, that though merely giving pleasure is no

part of an orator's duty, yet he has no vocation to give his audience pain;—which any one must feel who listens to a speaker delivering himself with difficulty and hesitation.

The practice of composition seems never to have been familiar to Mr. Fox. His speeches show this; perhaps his writings still more; because there, the animation of the momentary excitement which often carried him on in speaking had little or no play. One of his worst speeches, if not his worst, is that upon Francis, Duke of Bedford; and it is known to be almost the only one he had ever much prepared, and the only one he ever corrected for the press. His "History," too, shows the same want of expertness in composition. The style is pure and correct; but cold and lifeless; it is even somewhat abrupt and discontinuous; so little does it flow naturally or with ease. Yet, when writing letters without any effort, no one expressed himself more happily or with more graceful facility; and in conversation, of which he only partook when the society was small and intimate, he was a model of every excellence, whether solid or gay, plain or refined—full of information, witty and playful betimes, never ill-natured for a moment;—above all, never afraid of an argument, as so many eminent men are wont to be; but, on the contrary, courting discussion on all subjects, perhaps without much regard to their relative importance; as if reasoning were his natural element, in which his great faculties moved the most freely. An admirable judge, but himself addicted to reasoning upon general principles, the late Mr. Dumont, used to express his surprise at the love of minute discussion, of argumentation upon trifling subjects, which this great man often showed. But the cause was clear: argument he must have; and as his studies, except upon historical and classical points, had been extremely confined, when matters of a political or critical cast were not on the carpet, he took whatever ordinary matter came uppermost, and made it the subject of discussion. To this circumstance may be added his playful good nature; which partook, as Mr.

Gibbon observed, of the simplicity of a child; making him little fastidious and easily interested and amused.

Having premised all these qualifications, it must now be added that Mr. Fox's eloquence was of a kind which, to comprehend, you must have heard himself. When he got fairly into his subject, was heartily warmed with it, he poured forth words and periods of fire that smote you, and deprived you of all power to reflect and rescue yourself, while he went on to seize the faculties of the listener, and carry them captive along with him whithersoever he might please to rush. It is ridiculous to doubt that he was a far closer reasoner, a much more argumentative speaker, than Demosthenes; as much more so as Demosthenes would perhaps have been than Fox had he lived in our times, and had to address an English House of Commons. For it is the kindred mistake of those who fancy that the two were like each other, to imagine that the Grecian's orations are long chains of ratiocination, like Sir William Grant's arguments, or Euclid's demonstrations. They are close to the point; they are full of impressive allusions; they abound in expositions of the adversary's inconsistency; they are loaded with bitter invective; they never lose sight of the subject; and they never quit hold of the hearer, by the striking appeals they make to his strongest feelings and his favourite recollections: to the heart, or to the quick and immediate sense of inconsistency, they are always addressed, and find their way thither by the shortest and surest road; but to the head, to the calm and sober judgment, as pieces of argumentation, they assuredly are not addressed. But Mr. Fox, as he went along, and exposed absurdity, and made inconsistent arguments clash, and laid bare shuffling or hypocrisy, and showered down upon meanness, or upon cruelty, or upon oppression, a pitiless storm of the most fierce invective, was ever forging also the long, and compacted, and massive chain of pure demonstration.

Εν δ' εθετ' ακμοθετω μεγαν ακμονα, κοπτε δε δεσμους
'Αρρηκτους αλυτους, οφρ εμπεδον αυθι μενοιεν.

(*Od.* Θ.)

There was no weapon of argument which this great

orator more happily or more frequently wielded than wit,—the wit which exposes to ridicule the absurdity or inconsistency of an adverse argument. It has been said of him, we believe by Mr. Frere,* that he was the wittiest speaker of his times; and they were the times of Sheridan and of Windham. This was Mr. Canning's opinion, and it was also Mr. Pitt's. There was nothing more awful in Mr. Pitt's sarcasm, nothing so vexatious in Mr. Canning's light and galling raillery, as the battering and piercing wit with which Mr. Fox so often interrupted, but always supported, the heavy artillery of his argumentative declamation.

> "Nonne fuit satius, tristes Amaryllidis iras,
> Atque superba pati fastidia? Nonne, Menalcan."

In debate he had that ready discernment of an adversary's weakness, and the advantage to be taken of it, which is, in the war of words, what the *coup d'œil* of a practised general is in the field. He was ever best in reply: his opening speeches were almost always unsuccessful; the one in 1805, upon the Catholic Question, was a great exception; and the previous meditation upon it, after having heard Lord Grenville's able opening of the same question in the House of Lords, gave him much anxiety: he felt exceedingly *nervous*, to use the common expression. It was a noble performance, instinct with sound principle; full of broad and striking views of policy: abounding in magnanimous appeals to justice; and bold assertions of right; in one passage touching and pathetic,—the description of a Catholic soldier's feelings on reviewing some field where he had shared the dangers of the fight, yet repined to think that he could never taste the glories of command. His greatest speeches were those in 1792, on the Russian armament, on parliamentary reform in 1797, and on the renewal of the war in 1803. The last he himself preferred to all the others; and it had the disadvantage, if it be not however, in another sense, the advantage,†

* See Quarterly Review for October, 1810.

† To a great speaker, it is always an advantage to follow a powerful adversary. The audience is prepared for attention, nay, even feels a craving for some answer.

of coming after the finest speech, excepting that on the slave trade, ever delivered by his great antagonist. But there are passages in the earlier speeches,—particularly the fierce attack upon Lord Auckland in the Russian speech,—and the impressive and vehement summary of our failings and our misgovernment in the Reform speech, which it would be hard to match even in the speech of 1803. But for the inferiority of the subject, the speech upon the Westminster Scrutiny in 1784 might perhaps be justly placed at the head of them all. The surpassing interest of the question to the speaker himself; the thorough knowledge of all its details possessed by his audience, which made it sufficient to allude to matters and not to state them;"* the undeniably strong grounds of attack which he had against his adversary; all conspire to make this great oration as animated and energetic throughout, as it is perfectly felicitous both in the choice of topics and the handling of them. A fortunate cry of "*Order*," which he early raised in the very exordium, by affirming that "far from expecting any indulgence, he could scarcely hope for bare justice from the House," gave him occasion for dwelling on this topic, and pressing it home with additional illustration; till the redoubled blows and repeated bursts of extemporaneous declamation almost overpowered the audience, while they wholly bore down all further interruption. A similar effect is said to have been produced by Mr. (now Lord) Plunket, in the Irish House of Commons, upon some one calling out to take down his words. "Stop," said this consummate orator, "and you shall have something more to take down;" and then followed in a torrent, the most vehement and indignant description of the wrongs which his country had sustained, and had still to endure.

In most of the external qualities of oratory, Mr. Fox was certainly deficient, being of an unwieldy person, without any grace of action, with a voice of little com-

* This is one main cause of the conciseness and rapidity of the Greek orations; they were all on a few simple topics thoroughly known to the whole audience. Much of their difficulty comes also from this source.

pass, and which, when pressed in the vehemence of his speech, became shrill almost to a cry or squeak; yet all this was absolutely forgotten in the moment when the torrent began to pour. Some of the under tones of his voice were peculiarly sweet; and there was even in the shrill and piercing sounds which he uttered when at the more exalted pitch, a power that thrilled the heart of the hearer. His pronunciation of our language was singularly beautiful, and his use of it pure and chaste to severity. As he rejected, from the correctness of his taste, all vicious ornaments, and was most sparing, indeed, in the use of figures at all; so, in his choice of words, he justly shunned foreign idiom, or words borrowed, whether from the ancient or modern languages; and affected the pure Saxon tongue, the resources of which are unknown to so many who use it, both in writing and in speaking.

If from the orator we turn to the man, we shall find much more to blame and to lament, whether his private character be regarded or his public; but for the defects of the former, there are excuses to be offered, almost sufficient to remove the censure, and leave the feeling of regret entire and alone. The foolish indulgence of a father, from which he inherited his talents certainly, but little principle, put him, while yet a boy, in the possession of pecuniary resources which cannot safely be trusted to more advanced stages of youth; and the dissipated habits of the times drew him, before the age of manhood, into the whirlpool of fashionable excess. In the comparatively correct age in which our lot is cast, it would be almost as unjust to apply our more severe standard to him and his associates, as it would have been for the Ludlows and Hutchinsons of the seventeenth century, in writing a history of the Roman empire, to denounce the immoralities of Julius Cæsar. Nor let it be forgotten that the noble heart and sweet disposition of this great man passed unscathed through an ordeal which, in almost every other instance, is found to deaden all the kindly and generous affections. A life of gambling, and intrigue, and faction, left the nature of Charles Fox as

little tainted with selfishness or falsehood, and his heart as little hardened, as if he had lived and died in a farm-house; or rather as if he had not outlived his childish years.

The historian of a character so attractive, the softer features of which present a rare contrast to the accustomed harshness of political men, is tempted to extend the same indulgence, and ascribe the errors of the statesman to the accidents of his position, or the less lofty tone of principle which distinguished the earlier period of his public life, while his principles of conduct were forming and ripening. The great party, too, which he so long led with matchless personal influence, would gladly catch at such a means of defence; but as the very same measure of justice or of mercy must be meted out to the public conduct of Mr. Pitt, his great rival, there would be little gain to party pride by that sacrifice of principle, which could alone lead to such unworthy concessions. It is of most dangerous example, of most corrupting tendency, ever to let the faults of statesmen pass uncensured; or to treat the errors or the crimes which involve the interests of millions with the same indulgence towards human frailty which we may, in the exercise of charity, show towards the more venial transgressions that only hurt an individual; most commonly only the wrong-doer himself. Of Mr. Fox it must be said, that whilst his political principles were formed upon the true model of the Whig School, and led him, when combined with his position as opposing the government's warlike and oppressive policy, to defend the liberty of America, and support the cause of peace both in that and the French war, yet he constantly modified these principles, according to his own situation and circumstances as a party chief; making the ambition of the man and the interest of his followers the governing rule of his conduct. The charge is a grave one; but unhappily the facts fully bear it out. Because Lord Shelburne had gained the King's ear, by an intrigue possibly, but then Lord Shelburne never had pretended to be a follower of Mr. Fox,

the latter formed a coalition with Lord North, whose person and whose policy he had spent his whole life in decrying; whose misgovernment of America had been the cause of nearly destroying the empire; and whose whole principles were the very reverse of his own. The ground taken by this coalition on which to subvert the government of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, was, their having made a peace favourable to England beyond what could have been expected, after the state to which Lord North's maladministration had reduced her; their having, among other things, given the new American States too large concessions; and their having made inadequate provision for the security and indemnity of the American loyalists. On such grounds they, Mr. Fox and Lord North, succeeded in overturning the ministry, and took their places; which they held for a few months, when the King dismissed them, amidst the all but universal joy of the country; men of all ranks, and parties, and sects, joining in one feeling of disgust at the factious propensities in which the unnatural alliance was begotten; and apprehending from it, as Mr. Wilberforce remarked, "a progeny stamped with the features of both parents, the violence of one party, and the corruption of the other." This grand error raised the Tories and Mr. Pitt to the power which, during their long and undisturbed reign, they enjoyed, notwithstanding all the unparalleled difficulties of the times, and in spite of so many failures in all the military enterprises of themselves and of their foreign allies. The original quarrel with Mr. Pitt was an error proceeding from the same evil source. His early but mature talents had been amply displayed; he had already gained an influence in Parliament and the country, partly from hereditary, partly from personal qualities, second only to that of Mr. Fox; his private character was wholly untarnished; his principles were the same with those of the Whigs; he had nobly fought with them the battle which destroyed the North administration. Yet no first-rate place could be found to offer him; although Mr. Fox had once and again declared a boundless admiration of his genius, and an unlimited confidence in

his character. Lord John Cavendish, of an illustrious Whig house by birth, but himself one of the most obscure of mankind, must needs be made Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Pitt was the only son of Lord Chatham, and a man of vast talents, as well as spotless reputation, and he was thus not permitted, without a sacrifice of personal honour, to be the ally of Mr. Fox, in serving their common country. How much misery and mischief might the world have been spared had the Rockingham Ministry preferred Mr. Pitt to Lord John Cavendish, and made the union between him and the Whigs perpetual! We shall presently see that an error almost as great in itself, though in its consequences far from being so disastrous, was afterwards committed by Mr. Pitt himself.

The interval between the American and the French wars was passed by Mr. Fox in opposing whatever was proposed by his antagonist; with the single exception of the measures for restoring the Stadtholder's authority in 1787. His hearty admiration of the French Revolution is well known; and it was wholly unqualified by any of the profound and sagacious forebodings of Mr. Burke, excited by the distrust of vast and sudden changes among a people wholly unprepared; and which seems never afterwards to have been diminished by the undoubted fact of a minority having obtained the sway, and being compelled to make up, with the resources of terror for the essential want of support among the people at large. The separation of his aristocratic supporters, and the unfortunate war to which it led, left him to struggle for peace and the Constitution, with a small but a steady band of noble-minded associates; and their warfare for the rights of the people during the dismal period of alarm which elapsed from 1793 to 1801, when the healing influence of the Addington Government was applied to our national wounds, cannot be too highly extolled. The Whigs thus regained the confidence of the nation, which their Coalition ten years before seemed to have forfeited for ever. The new junction with the Grenville party in 1804 was liable to none of the same

objections; it was founded on common principles; and it both honoured its authors and served the State. But when, upon Mr. Pitt's death, Mr. Fox again became possessed of power, we find him widely different from the leader of a hopeless though high-principled Opposition to the Court of George III. He consented to take office without making any stipulation with the King on behalf of the Catholics; a grave neglect, which afterwards subverted the Whig Government; and if it be said that this sacrifice was made to obtain the greater object of peace with France, then it must be added that he was slack indeed in his pursuit of that great object. He allowed the odious income-tax to be nearly doubled, after being driven, one by one, from the taxes proposed; and proposed on the very worst principles ever dreamt of by financiers. He defended the unprincipled arrangement for making the Lord Chief Justice of England a politician, by placing him in the Cabinet. He joined as heartily as any one in the fervour of loyal enthusiasm for the Hanoverian possessions of the Crown. On one great subject his sense of right, no less than his warm and humane feelings, kept him invariably true to the great principles of justice as well as policy. His attachment was unceasing, and his services invaluable to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which his last accession to office certainly accelerated by several years. For this, and for his support of Lord Erskine in his amendment of the Law of Libel, the lasting gratitude of his country and of mankind is due; and to the memory of so great and so amiable a man it is a tribute which will for ever be cheerfully paid. But to appreciate the gratitude which his country owes him, we must look not to his ministerial life; we must recur to his truly glorious career as leader of the patriot band which, during the almost hopeless struggle from 1793 to 1801, upheld the cause of afflicted freedom. If to the genius and the courage of Erskine we may justly be said to owe the escape from proscription and from arbitrary power, Fox stands next to him as the preserver of that sacred fire of liberty which they saved to blaze forth in happier

times. Nor could even Erskine have triumphed as he did, had not the party which Fox so nobly led persevered in maintaining the sacred warfare, and in rallying round them whatever was left of the old English spirit to resist oppression.

MR. PITT.

The circumstances of his celebrated antagonist's situation were as different from his own as could well be imagined. It was not merely disparity of years by which they were distinguished; all the hereditary prejudices under which the one appeared before the country were as unfavourable, as the prepossessions derived from his father's character and renown were auspicious to the entrance of the other upon the theatre of public affairs. The grief, indeed, was yet recent which the people had felt for the loss of Lord Chatham's genius, so proudly towering above all party views and personal ties, so entirely devoted to the cause of his principles and his patriotism—when his son appeared to take his station, and contest the first rank in the popular affections with the son of him whose policy and parts had been sunk into obscurity by the superior lustre of his adversary's capacity and virtues. But the young statesman's own talents and conduct made good the claim which his birth announced. At an age when others are but entering upon the study of state affairs and the practice of debating, he came forth a mature politician, a finished orator,—even, as if by inspiration, an accomplished debater. His knowledge, too, was not confined to the study of the classics, though with these he was familiarly conversant; the more severe pursuits of Cambridge had imparted to him some acquaintance with the stricter sciences which have had their home upon the banks of the Granta since Newton made them his abode; and with political philosophy he was more familiar than most Englishmen of his own age. Having prepared himself, too, for being called to the bar, and both attended on courts of justice and frequented the western circuit, he had more knowledge and habits of business than can fall to the share of our young patricians;—the material out of which British statesmen are for the

most part fashioned by an attendance upon debates in Parliament, and a study of newspapers in the clubs. Happy had he not too soon removed into office from the prosecution of studies which his rapid success broke off never to be resumed! For the leading defect of his life, which is seen through all his measures, and which not even his great capacity and intense industry could supply, was an ignorance of the principles upon which large measures are to be framed, and nations to be at once guided and improved. As soon as he entered upon official duties, his time was at the mercy of every one who had a claim to prefer, a grievance to complain of, or a nostrum to propound; nor could the hours of which the day consists suffice at once to give all these their audience; to transact the routine business of his station; to direct or to counteract the intrigues of party; and, at the same time to learn all that his sudden transplanting from the study to the Cabinet, and from the bar to the Senate, had of necessity left unlearnt.

From hence, and from the temptation always afforded in times of difficultiy to avoid as much as possible all unnecessary embarrassments and all risks not forced upon him, arose the peculiarity which marks his story, and marks it in a way not less hurtful to his own renown, through after ages, than unfortunate for his country. With more power than any minister ever possessed—with an Opposition which rather was a help than hindrance to him during the greater part of his rule—with a friendly Court, an obsequious Parliament, a confiding people—he held the supreme place in the public councils for twenty years, and excepting the Union with Ireland, which was forced upon him by a rebellion, and which was both corruptly and imperfectly carried, so as to produce the smallest possible benefit to either country, he has not left a single measure behind him for which the community, whose destines he so long swayed, has any reason to respect his memory; while, by want of firmness, he was the cause of an impolicy and extrava-

gance, the effects of which are yet felt, and will oppress us beyond the life of the youngest now alive.

It is assuredly not to Mr. Pitt's sinking-fund that we allude, as showing his defective political resources; that scheme, now exploded, after being gradually given up by all adepts in the science of finance, was for many years their favourite; nor can he in this particular be so justly charged, as he well may in all the rest of his measures, with never having gone before his age, and not always being upon a level with the wisdom of his own times. Yet may it be confessed that, his financial administration being the main feature in his official history, all his other plans are allowed to have been failures at the time; and this, the only exception, began to be questioned before his decease and has long been abandoned.* Neither should we visit harshly the entire change of his opinions upon the great question of Reform; albeit the question with which his claims to public favour commenced, and on his support of which his early popularity and power were almost wholly grounded. But the force, it must be admitted, of the defence urged for his conversion, that the alarms raised in the most reflecting minds by the French Revolution, and its cognate excitement among ourselves, justified a reconsideration of the opinions originally entertained upon our parliamentary system, and might induce an honest alteration of them. That any such considerations could never justify him in lending himself to the persecution of his former associates in that cause, may be peremptorily denied; and in aid of this denial, it may be asked, what would have been said of Mr. Wilberforce, and the other abolitionists, had they, on account of some dreadful desolation of our colonies by negro insurrection, suddenly joined in proscribing and persecuting all who, after they themselves had left the cause, should continue to devote their efforts to its promotion? But the main charge against Mr. Pitt is his having suffered himself

* It was Dr. Price's Plan; and he complained that of the three schemes proposed by him, Mr. Pitt had selected the worst.

to be led away by the alarms of the court, and the zeal of his new allies, the Burke and Windham party, from the ardent love of peace which he professed and undoubtedly felt, to the eager support of the war against France, which might well have been avoided had he but stood firm. The deplorable consequences of this change in his conduct are too well known; they are still too sensibly felt. But are the motives of it wholly free from suspicion? *Cui bono?* was the question put by the Roman lawyer, when the person really guilty of any act was sought for. A similar question may often be put, without any want of charity, when we are in quest of the motives which prompted a doubtful or suspicious course of action, proved by experience to have been disastrous to the world. That, as the chief of a party, Mr. Pitt was incalculably a gainer by the event which, for a while, well-nigh annihilated the Opposition to his Ministry, and left that Opposition crippled as long as the war lasted, no man can doubt. That, independent of its breaking up the Whig party, the war gave their antagonist a constant lever wherewithal to move at will both parliament and people, as long as the sinews of war could be obtained from the resources of the country, is at least as unquestionable a fact.

His conduct of the war betrayed no extent of views, no commanding notions of policy. Anything more common-place can hardly be imagined. To form one coalition after another in Germany, and subsidise them with millions of free gift, or aid with profuse loans, until all the powers in our pay were defeated in succession, and most of them either destroyed or converted into allies of the enemy—such were all the resources of his diplomatic policy. To shun any effectual conflict with the enemy, while he wasted our military force in petty expeditions; to occupy forts, and capture colonies, which, if France prevailed in Europe, were useless acquisitions, only increasing the amount of the slave trade, and carrying abroad our own capital, and which, if France were beaten in Europe, would all of themselves fall into our hands—such was the whole scheme of his warlike

policy. The operations of our navy, which were undertaken as a matter of course, and would have been performed, and must have led to our brilliant maritime successes, whoever was the minister, nay, whether or not there was any minister at all, may be added to the account; but can have little or no influence upon the estimate to be formed of his belligerent administration. When, after a most culpable refusal to treat with Napoleon in 1800, grounded on the puerile hope of the newly-gotten Consular power being soon overthrown, he found it impossible any longer to continue the ruinous expenditure of the war, he retired, placing in his office his puppet, with whom he quarrelled for refusing to retire when he was bidden. But the ostensible ground of his resignation was the King's bigoted refusal to emancipate the Irish Catholics. Nothing could have more redounded to his glory than this. But he resumed office in 1804, refused to make any stipulation for those same Catholics, and always opposed those who urged their claims, on the utterly unconstitutional ground of the King's personal prejudices; a ground quite as solid for yielding to that monarch in 1801, as for not urging him in 1804. It was quite as discreditable to him that on the same occasion, after pressing Mr. Fox upon George III. as an accession of strength necessary for well carrying on the war, he agreed to take office without any such accession, rather than thwart the personal antipathy, the capricious, the despicable antipathy of that narrow-minded and vindictive prince against the most illustrious of his subjects.*

* It is a singular instance of the great effects of trivial circumstances that the following anecdote has been preserved:—During the co-operation of all parties against Mr. Addington's Government in the spring of 1804, Mr. Pitt and Mr. C. Long were one night passing the door of Brooks's club-house, on their way from the House of Commons, when Mr. Pitt, who had not been there since the Coalition of 1784, said he had a great mind to go in and sup. His wary friend said, "I think you had better not," and turned aside the well-conceived intention. When we reflect on the high favour Mr. Pitt then was in with the Whigs, and consider the nature of Mr. Fox as well as his own, we can have little doubt of the cordial friendship which such a night would have cemented, and that the union of the two parties would have been complete.

These are heavy charges; but we fear the worst remains to be urged against the conduct of this eminent person. No man felt more strongly on the subject of the African Slave Trade than he; and all who heard him are agreed that his speeches against it were the finest of his noble orations. Yet did he continue for eighteen years of his life, suffering every one of his colleagues, nay, of his mere underlings in office, to vote against the question of Abolition, if they thought fit; men, the least inconsiderable of whom durst no more have thwarted him upon any of the more trifling measures of his government, than they durst have thrust their heads into the fire. Even the foreign slave trade, and the traffic which his war policy had trebled by the captured enemy's colonies, he suffered to grow and prosper under the fostering influence of British capital; and after letting years and years glide away, and hundreds of thousands be torn from their own country, and carried to perpetual misery in ours, while one stroke of his pen could, at any moment, have stopped it for ever, he only could be brought to issue, a few months before his death, the Order in Council which at length destroyed the pestilence. This is by far the gravest charge to which Mr. Pitt's memory is exposed.

If from the statesman we turn to the orator, the contrast is indeed marvellous. He is to be placed, without any doubt, in the highest class. With a sparing use of ornament, hardly indulging more in figures, or even in figurative expression, than the most severe examples of ancient chasteness allowed—with little variety of style, hardly any of the graces of manner—he no sooner rose than he carried away every hearer, and kept the attention fixed and unflagging till it pleased him to let it go; and then

> "So charming left his voice, that we, awhile,
> Still thought him speaking, still stood fixed to hear."

This magical effect was produced by his unbroken flow, which never for a moment left the hearer in pain or doubt, and yet was not the mean fluency of mere relaxa-

tion, requiring no effort of the speaker, but imposing on the listener a heavy task; by his lucid arrangement, which made all parts of the most complicated subject quit their entanglement, and fall each into its place; by the clearness of his statements, which presented at once a picture to the mind; by the forcible appeals to strict reason and strong feeling, which formed the great staple of the discourse; by the majesty of the diction; by the depth and fulness of the most sonorous voice, and the unbending dignity of the manner, which ever reminded us that we were in the presence of more than an advocate or debater, that there stood before us a ruler of the people. Such were the effects invariably of this singular eloquence; and they were as certainly produced on ordinary occasions, as in those grander displays when he rose to the height of some great argument; or indulged in vehement invective against some individual, and variegated his speech with that sarcasm of which he was so great, and indeed so little sparing a master; although even here all was uniform and consistent; nor did anything, in any mood of mind, ever drop from him that was unsuited to the majestic frame of the whole, or could disturb the serenity of the full and copious flood that rolled along.

But if such was the unfailing impression at first produced, and which, for a season absorbing the faculties, precluded all criticism; upon reflection, faults and imperfections certainly were disclosed. There prevailed a monotony in the matter, as well as in the manner; and even the delightful voice which so long prevented this from being felt, was itself almost without any variety of tone. All things were said nearly in the same way; as if by some curious machine periods were rounded and flung off; as if, in like moulds, though of different sizes, ideas were shaped and brought out. His composition was correct enough, but not peculiarly felicitous; his English was sufficiently pure without being at all racy, or various, or brilliant; his style was, by Mr. Windham, called "a state-paper style," in allusion to its combined dignity and poverty; and the same nice observer, referring to the eminently skilful way in which he balanced

his phrases, sailed near the wind, and seemed to disclose much whilst he kept the greater part of his meaning to himself, declared that he verily believed Mr. Pitt could speak a King's speech off-hand." His declamation was admirable, mingling with and clothing the argument, as to be good for anything it always must; and no more separable from the reasoning, than the heat is from the metal in a stream of lava. Yet, with all this excellence, the last effect of the highest eloquence was for the most part wanting; we seldom forget the speaker, or lost the artist in the work. He was earnest enough; he seemed quite sincere; he was moved himself as he would move us; we even went along with him, and forgot *ourselves;* but we hardly forgot *him;* and while thrilled with the glow which his burning words diffused, or transfixed with wonder at so marvellous a display of skill, we yet felt that it was admiration of a consummate artist which filled us, and that after all we were present at an exhibition; gazing upon a wonderful performer indeed, but still a performer.

We have ventured to name the greatest displays of Mr. Fox's oratory; and it is fit we should attempt as much by his illustrious rival's. The speech on the war, in 1803, which, by an accident that befel the gallery, was never reported, is generally supposed to have excelled all his other performances in vehement and spirit-stirring declamation; and this may be the more easily believed when we know that Mr. Fox, in his reply, said, "The orators of antiquity would have admired, probably would have envied it." The last half hour is described as having been one unbroken torrent of the most majestic declamation. Of those which are in any degree preserved (though it must be remarked that the characteristics now given of his eloquence show how much of it was sure to escape even the fullest transcript that could be given of the words), the finest in all probability is that upon the peace of 1783, and the Coalition, when he closed his magnificent peroration by that noble yet simple figure, "And if this inauspicious union be not already consummated, in the name of my country I forbid the bans." But all authorities agree in placing

his speech on the Slave Trade, in 1791, before any other effort of his genius; because it combined, with the most impassioned declamation, the deepest pathos, the most lively imagination, and the closest reasoning. We have it from a friend of his own, who sat beside him on this memorable occasion, that its effects on Mr. Fox were manifest during the whole period of the delivery, while Mr. Sheridan expressed his feelings in the most hearty and even passionate terms; and we have it from Mr. Windham that he walked home lost in amazement at the compass, till then unknown to him, of human eloquence. It is from the former source of information that we derive the singular fact of the orator's health at the time being such as to require his retirement immediately before he rose, in order to take a medicine required for allaying the violent irritation of his stomach.

Let it, however, be added, that he was from the first a finished debater, although certainly practice and the habit of command had given him more perfect quickness in perceiving an advantage and availing himself of an opening, as it were, in the adverse battle, with the skill and the rapidity wherewith our Wellington, in an instant perceiving the columns of Marmont somewhat too widely separated, executed the movement that gave him the victory of Salamanca. So did Mr. Pitt overthrow his great antagonist on the Regency, and in some other conflicts. It may be further observed, that never was any kind of eloquence, or any cast of talents more perfectly suited to the position of leading the Government forces, keeping up the spirits of his followers under disaster, encouraging them to stand a galling adverse fire, above all, presenting them and the friendly though neutral portion of the audience, with reason or with plausible pretexts for giving the Government that support which the one class desired to give, and the other had no disposition to withhold. The effects which his calm and dignified, yet earnest, manner produced on these classes, and the impression which it left on their minds, have been admirably portrayed by one of the most able among them, and with his well-chosen words this im-

perfect sketch of so great a subject may be closed:—"Every part of his speaking, in sentiment, in language, and in delivery, evidently bore the stamp of his character. All communicated a definite and varied apprehension of the qualities of strenuousness without bustle, unlaboured intrepidity, and severe greatness."*

Nothing that we have yet said of this extraordinary person has touched upon his private character, unless so far as the graver faults of the politician must ever border upon the vices or the frailties of the man. But it must be admitted, what even his enemies were willing to confess, that in his failings, or in his delinquencies, there was nothing mean, paltry, or low. His failings were ascribed to love of power and of glory; and pride was the harshest feature that disfigured him to the public eye. We doubt if this can all be said with perfect justice: still more that if it could, any satisfactory defence would thus be made. The ambition cannot be pronounced very lofty which showed that place, mere high station, was so dear to it as to be sought without regard to its just concomitant power, and clung by after being stript of this, the only attribute that can recommend it to noble minds. Yet he well described his office as "the pride of his heart and the pleasure of his life," when boasting that he had sacrificed it to his engagements with Ireland at the Union; and then, within a very short period, he proved that the pleasure and the pride were far too dearly loved to let him think of that tie when he again grasped them, wholly crippled, and deprived of all power to carry a single measure of importance. Nor can any thirst for power itself, any ambition, be it of the most exalted kind, ever justify the measures which he contrived for putting to death those former coadjutors of his own, whose leading object was reform; even if they had overstepped the bounds of law, in the pursuit of their common purpose. His conduct on the Slave Trade falls within the same view; and leaves a dark shade resting upon his reputation as a man—a shade which, God be

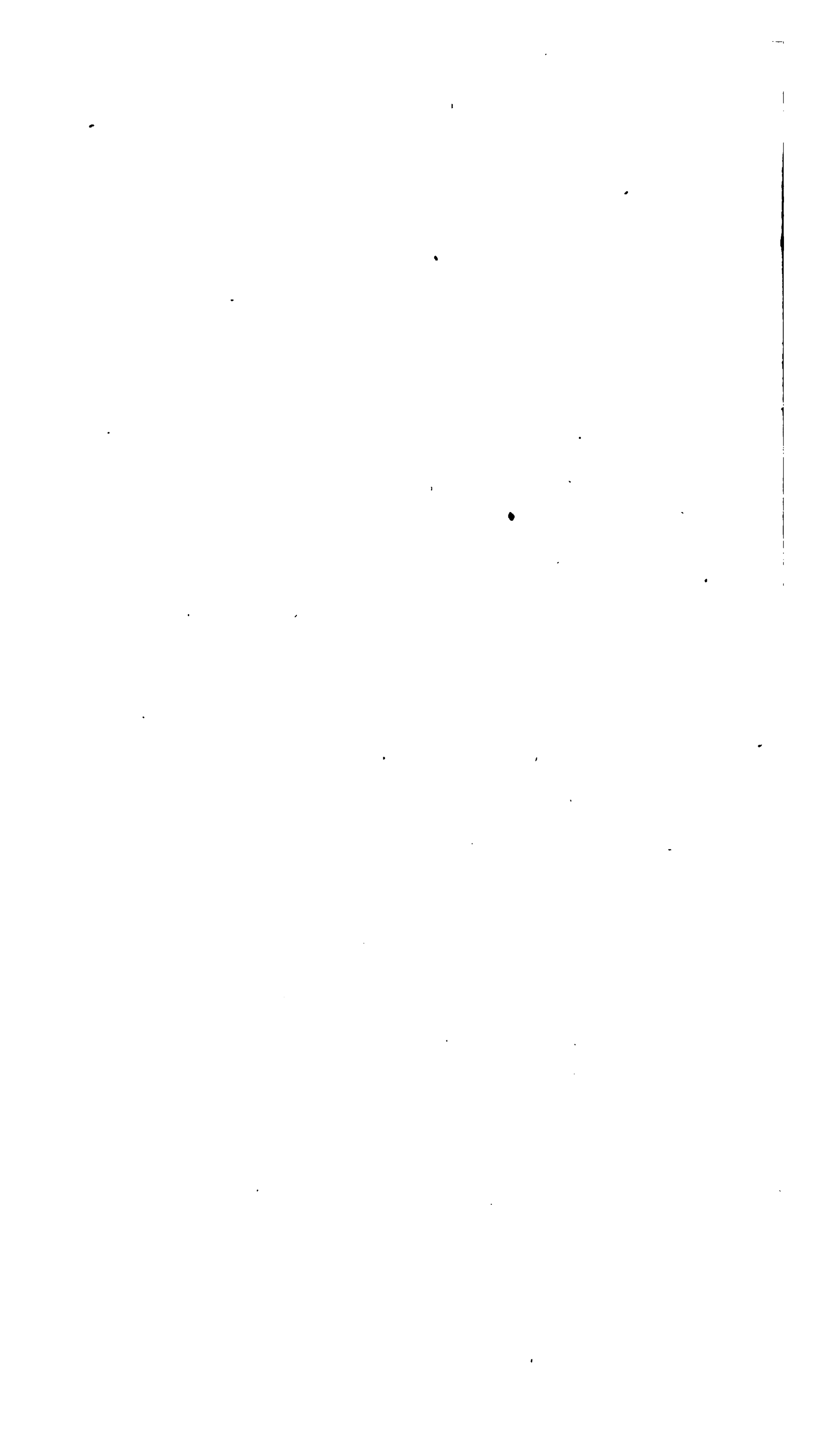
* *Quarterly Review, August*, 1810.—Supposed to be by Mr. J. H. Frere, but avowedly by an intimate personal friend.

praised, few would take to be the first of orators and greatest of ministers.

In private life he was singularly amiable; his spirits were naturally buoyant and even playful; his affections warm; his veracity scrupulously exact; his integrity wholly without a stain; and, although he was, from his situation, cut off from most of the relations of domestic life, as a son and brother he was perfect, and no man was more fondly beloved or more sincerely mourned by his friends.*

It was a circumstance broadly distinguishing the parliamentary position of the two great leaders whom we have been surveying, that while the one had to fight the whole battle of his government for many years, the first and most arduous of his life, if not single-handed, yet but with one coadjutor of any power, the other was surrounded by "troops of friends," any one of whom might well have borne the foremost part. Against such men as Burke, Windham, Sheridan, North, Erskine, Lee, Barrè—Mr. Pitt could only set Mr. Dundas; and it is certainly the most astonishing part of his history, that against such a phalanx, backed by the majority of the Commons, he could struggle all through the first session of his administration. Indeed, had it not been for the support which he received both from the Court, and the Lords, and from the People, who were justly offended with the unnatural coalition of his adversaries, this session would not only have been marvellous but impossible.

* The story told of his refusing to marry Mademoiselle Necker (afterwards Madame de Staël), when the match was proposed by the father, rests upon a true foundation; but the form of the answer, "That he was already married to his country," has, unless it was a jest, which is very possible, no more foundation than the dramatic exit described by Mr. Rose in the House of Commons, when he stated "Oh my country!" to have been his last words—though it is certain, that, for many hours, he only uttered incoherent sentences. Such things were too theatrical for so great a man, and of too vulgar a cast for so consummate a performer had he stooped to play a part in such circumstances.



MR. SHERIDAN.

Of Mr. Fox's adherents who have justly been named, the most remarkable certainly was Mr. Sheridan, and with all his faults, and all his failings, and all his defects, the first in genius and greatest in power. When the illustrious name of Erskine appears in the bright catalogue, it is unnecessary to add that we here speak of parliamentary genius and political power.

These sketches as naturally begin with a notice of the means by which the great rhetorical combatants were brought up, and trained and armed for the conflict, as Homer's battles do with the buckling on of armour and other notes of preparation, when he brings his warriors forward upon the scene. Of Mr. Sheridan any more than of Mr. Burke, it cannot be lamented, as of almost all other English statesmen, that he came prematurely into public life, without time given for preparation by study. Yet this time in his case had been far otherwise spent than in Mr. Burke's. Though his education had not been neglected, for he was bred at Harrow, and with Dr. Parr, yet he was an idle and a listless boy, learning as little as possible, and suffering as much wretchedness; an avowal which to the end of his life he never ceased to make, and to make in a very affecting manner. Accordingly, he brought away from school a very slender provision of classical learning; and his taste never correct or chaste, was wholly formed by acquaintance with the English poets and dramatists, and perhaps a few of our more ordinary prose writers; for in no other language could he read with anything approaching to ease. Of those poets, he most *professed* to admire and to have studied Dryden: he plainly *had* most studied Pope, whom he always vilified and always imitated. But of dramatists his passion evidently was Congreve, and after him Vanburgh, Farquhar, even Wycherly; all of whom served for the model, partly

even for the magazine of his own dramatic writings, as Pope did of his verses. "The Duenna," however, is formed after the fashion of Gay; of whom it falls further short than the "School for Scandal" does of Congreve. That his plays were great productions for any age, astonishing for a youth of twenty-three and twenty-five, is unquestionable. Johnson has accounted for the phenomenon of Congreve, at a still earlier period of life, showing much knowledge of the world, by observing that, on a close examination, his dialogues and characters might have been gathered from books "without much actual commerce with mankind." The same can hardly be said of the "School for Scandal;" but the author wrote it when he was five years older than Congreve had been at the date of the "Old Bachelor."

Thus with an ample share of literary and dramatic reputation, but not certainly of the kind most auspicious for a statesman; with a most slender provision of knowledge at all likely to be useful in political affairs; with a position by birth and profession little suited to command the respect of the most aristocratic country in Europe—the son of an actor, the manager himself of a theatre—he came into that parliament which was enlightened by the vast and various knowledge, as well as fortified and adorned by the more choice literary fame of a Burke, and which owned the sway of consummate orators like Fox and Pitt. His first effort was unambitious, and it was unsuccessful. Aiming at but a low flight, he failed in that humble attempt. An experienced judge, Woodfall, told him, "It would never do;" and counselled him to seek again the more congenial atmosphere of Drury-lane. But he was resolved that it should do; he had taken his part; and, as he felt the matter was in him, he vowed not to desist till "he had brought it out." What he wanted in acquired learning, and in natural quickness, he made up by indefatigable industry; within given limits, toward a present object, no labour could daunt him; no man could work for a season with more steady and unwearied application. By constant practice in small matters, or before private committees,

by diligent attendance upon all debates, by habitual intercourse with all dealers in political wares, from the chiefs of parties and their more refined coteries to the providers of daily discussion for the public and the chroniclers of parliamentary speeches, he trained himself to a facility of speaking, absolutely essential to all but first-rate genius, and all but necessary even to that; and he acquired what acquaintance with the science of politics he ever possessed, or his speeches ever betrayed. By these steps he rose to the rank of a first-rate speaker, and as great a debater as a want of readiness and need for preparation would permit.

He had some qualities which led him to this rank, and which only required the habit of speech to bring them out into successful exhibition; a warm imagination, though more prone to repeat with variations the combination of others, or to combine anew their creations, than to bring forth original productions; a fierce, dauntless spirit of attack; a familiarity, acquired from the dramatic studies, with the feelings of the heart and the ways to touch its chords; a facility of epigram and point, the yet more direct gift of the same theatrical apprenticeship; an excellent manner, not unconnected with that experience; and a depth of voice which perfectly suited the tone of his declamation, be it invective, or be it descriptive, or be it impassioned. His wit, derived from the same source, or sharpened by the same previous habits, was eminently brilliant, and almost always successful; it was like all his speaking, exceedingly prepared, but was skilfully introduced and happily applied; and it was well mingled also with humour, occasionally descending to farce. How little it was the inspiration of the moment all men were aware who knew his habits; but a singular proof of this was presented by Mr. Moore when he came to write his life; for we there find given to the world, with a frankness which must almost have made their author shake in his grave, the secret note-books of this famous wit; and are thus enabled to trace the jokes, in embryo, with which he had so often made the walls of St. Stephen's shake in

a merriment excited by the happy appearance of sudden unpremeditated effusion.*

The adroitness with which he turned to account sudden occasions of popular excitement, and often at the expense of the Whig party, generally too indifferent to such advantages, and too insensible to the damage they thus sustained in public estimation, is well known. On the mutiny in the fleet, he was beyond all question right; on the French invasion, and on the attacks upon Napoleon, he was almost as certainly wrong; but these appeals to the people and to the national feelings of the house tended to make the orator well received, if they added little to the statesman's reputation; and of the latter character he was not ambitious. His most celebrated speech was certainly the one upon the "Begum Charge" in the proceedings against Hastings; and nothing can exceed the accounts left us of its unprecedented success. Not only the practice then first began, which has gradually increased till it greets every good speech, of cheering, on the speaker resuming his seat, but the minister besought the House to adjourn the decision of the question, as being incapacitated from forming a just judgment under the influence of such powerful eloquence; while all men on all sides vied with each other in extolling so wonderful a performance. Nevertheless, the opinion has now become greatly prevalent, that a portion of this success was owing to the speech having so greatly surpassed all the speaker's former efforts; to the extreme

* Take an instance from this author, giving extracts from the common-place book of the wit:—"He employs his fancy in his narrative, and keeps his recollections for his wit." Again the same idea is expanded into—"When he makes his jokes you applaud the accuracy of his memory, and 'tis only when he states his facts that you admire the flights of his imagination." But the thought was too good to be thus wasted on the desert air of a common-place book. So forth it came at the expense of Kelly, who, having been a composer of music, became a wine merchant. "You will," said the *ready* wit, "import your music and compose your wine." Nor was this service exacted from the old idea thought sufficient—So in the House of Commons an easy and apparently off-hand parenthesis was thus filled with it at Mr. Dundas's cost and charge ("who generally resorts to his memory for his jokes, and to his imagination for his facts").

interest of the topics which the subject naturally presented; and to the artist-like elaboration and beautiful delivery of certain fine passages, rather than to the merits of the whole. Certain it is, that the repetition of great part of it, presented in the short-hand notes of the speech on the same charge in Westminster Hall, disappoints every reader who has heard of the success which attended the earlier effort. In truth, Mr. Sheridan's taste was very far from being chaste, or even moderately correct; he delighted in gaudy figures; he was attracted by glare; and cared not whether the brilliancy came from tinsel or gold, from broken glass or pure diamond; he overlaid his thoughts with epigrammatic diction; he "played to the galleries," and indulged them, of course, with an endless succession of clap-traps. His worst passages by far were those which he evidently preferred himself; full of imagery often far-fetched, oftener gorgeous, and loaded with point that drew the attention of the hearer away from the thoughts to the words; and his best by far were those where he declaimed, with his deep clear voice, though somewhat thick utterance, with a fierce defiance of some adversary, or an unappeasable vengeance against some oppressive act; or reasoned rapidly, in the like tone, upon some plain matter of fact, or exposed as plainly to homely ridicule some puerile sophism; and in all this, his admirable manner was aided by an eye singularly piercing,* and a countenance which, though coarse, and even in some features gross, was yet animated and expressive, and could easily assume the figure of both rage, and menace, and scorn. The few sentences with which he thrilled the House on the liberty of the press in 1810 were worth, perhaps, more than all his elaborated epigrams and forced flowers on the Begum Charge, or all his denunciations of Napoleon; "whose morning orisons and evening prayers are for the conquest of England, whether he bends to the God of Battles or worships the Goddess of Reason;"† certainly far better than such pictures of his power, as his having "thrones for his watch-towers,

* It had the singularity of never winking. † 1802.

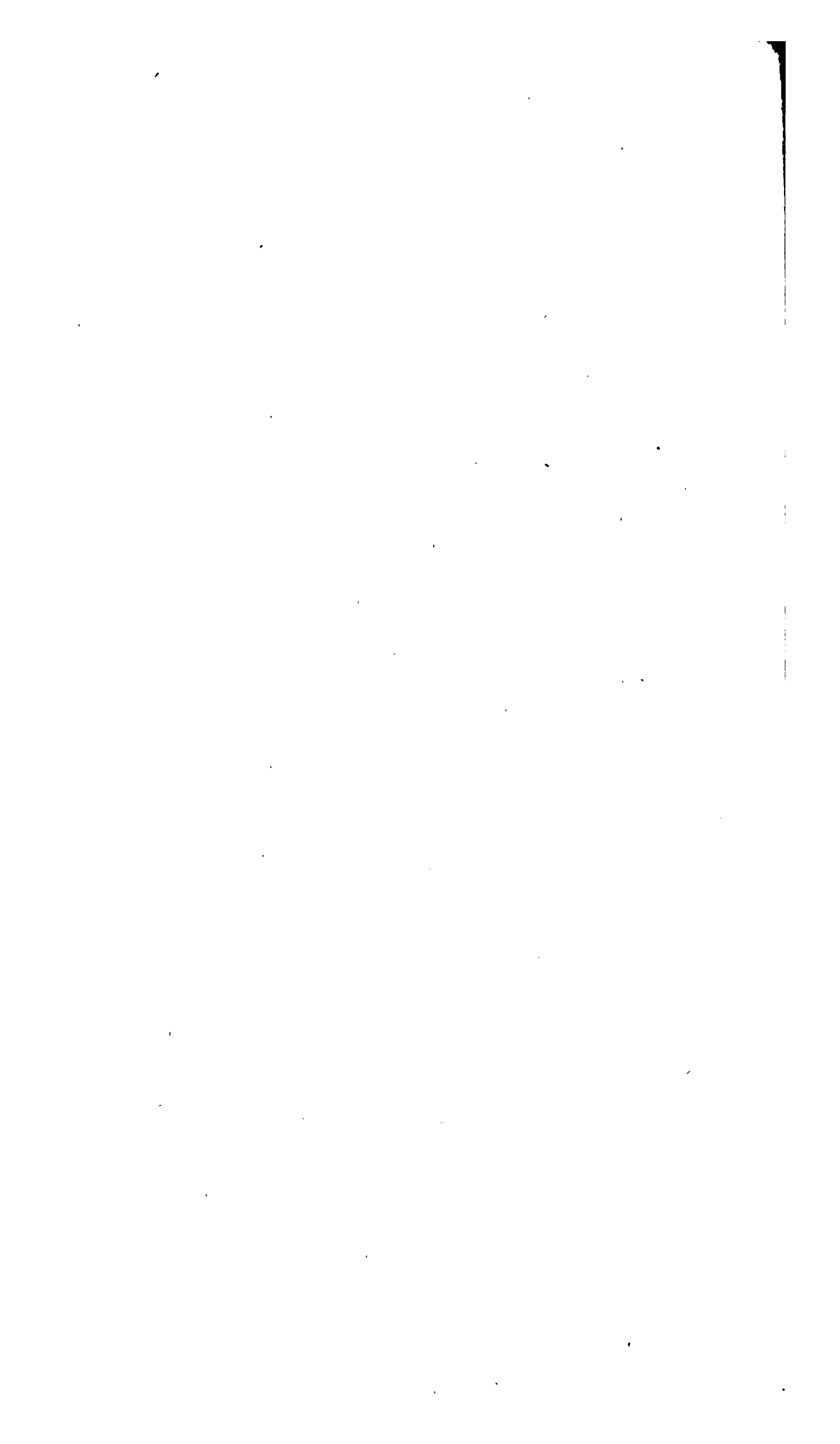
kings for his sentinels, and for the palisades of his castle, sceptres stuck with crowns."* "Give them," said he in 1810, and in a far higher strain of eloquence, "a corrupt House of Lords; give them a venal House of Commons; give them a tyrannical Prince; give them a truckling Court,—and let me but have an unfettered press; I will defy them to encroach a hair's-breadth upon the liberties of England."† Of all his speeches there can be little doubt that the most powerful, as the most chaste, was his reply, in 1805, upon the motion which he had made for repealing the Defence Act. Mr. Pitt had unwarily thrown out a sneer at his support of Mr. Addington, as though it was insidious. Such a stone, cast by a person whose house on that aspect was one pane of glass, could not fail to call down a shower of missiles; and they who witnessed the looks and gestures of the aggressor under the pitiless pelting of the tempest which he had provoked, represent it as certain that there were moments when he intended to fasten a personal quarrel upon the vehement and implacable declaimer.‡

When the just tribute of extraordinary admiration has been bestowed upon this great orator, the whole of his praise has been exhausted. As a statesman, he is without a place in any class, or of any rank; it would be incorrect and flattering to call him a bad, or a hurtful, or a short-sighted, or a middling statesman; he was no statesman at all. As a party man, his character stood lower than it deserved, chiefly from certain personal dislikes towards him; for, with the perhaps doubtful exception of his courting popularity at his party's expense on the two occasions already mentioned, and the much more serious charge against him of betraying his party in the Carlton House negotiation of 1812, followed by his extraordinary denial of the facts when he last appeared in Parliament, there can nothing be laid to his

* 1807. † 1810.

‡ Mr. Sheridan wrote this speech during the debate at a coffee-house near the Hall; and it is reported most accurately in the Parliamentary debates, apparently from his own notes.

charge as inconsistent with the rules of the strictest party duty and honour; although he made as large sacrifices as any unprofessional men ever did to the cause of a long and hopeless Opposition, and was often treated with unmerited coldness and disrespect by his coadjutors. But as a man, his character stood confessedly low; his intemperate habits, and his pecuniary embarrassments, did not merely tend to imprudent conduct, by which himself alone might be the sufferer; they involved his family in the same fate; and they also undermined those principles of honesty which are so seldom found to survive fallen fortunes, and hardly ever can continue the ornament and the stay of ruined circumstances, when the tastes and the propensities engendered in prosperous times survive through the ungenial season of adversity. Over the frailties and even the faults of genius, it is permitted to draw a veil, after marking them as much as the interests of virtue require, in order to warn against the evil example, and preserve the sacred flame bright and pure from such unworthy and unseemly contamination.



MR. WINDHAM.

Among the members of his party, to whom we have alluded as agreeing ill with Mr. Sheridan, and treating him with little deference, Mr. Windham was the most distinguished. The advantages of a refined classical education, a lively wit of the most pungent and yet abstruse description, a turn for subtle reasoning, drawing nice distinctions and pursuing remote analogies, great and early knowledge of the world, familiarity with men of letters and artists, as well as politicians, with Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds, as well as with Fox and North, much acquaintance with constitutional history and principle, a chivalrous spirit, a noble figure, a singularly expressive countenance—all fitted this remarkable person to shine in debate; but were all, when put together, unequal to the task of raising him to the first rank; and were, besides, mingled with defects which exceedingly impaired the impression of his oratory, while they diminished his usefulness and injured his reputation as a statesman. For he was too often the dupe of his own ingenuity; which made him doubt and balance, and gave an oscitancy fatal to vigour in council, as well as most prejudicial to the effects of eloquence, by breaking the force of his blows as they fell. His nature, too, perhaps owing to this hesitating disposition, was to be a follower, if not a worshipper, rather than an original thinker or actor; as if he felt some relief under the doubts which harassed him from so many quarters, in thus taking shelter under a master's wing, and devolving upon a less scrupulous balancer of conflicting reasons, the task of trimming the scales, and forming his opinions for him. Accordingly, first Johnson in private, and afterwards Burke on political matters, were the deities whom he adored; and he adhered manfully to the strong opinions of the latter, though oftentimes painfully compelled to suppress his sentiments, all the time

that he took counsel with Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, who would only consent to conduct the French war upon principles far lower and more compromising than those of the great anti-Jacobin and anti-Gallican leader. But when untrammeled by official connexion, and having his lips sealed by no decorum or prudence or other observance prescribed by station, it was a brave sight to see this gallant personage descend into the field of debate, panting for the fray, eager to confront any man or any number of men that might prove his match, scorning all the little suggestions of a paltry discretion, heedless of every risk of retort to which he might expose himself, as regardless of popular applause as of Court favour, nay, from his natural love of danger and disdain of everything like fear, rushing into the most offensive expression of the most unpopular opinions with as much alacrity as he evinced in braving the power and daring the enmity of the Crown. Nor was the style of his speaking at all like that of other men's. It was in the easy tone of familiar conversation; but it was full of nice observation and profound remark; it was instinct with classical allusion; it was even over-informed with philosophic and with learned reflection; it sparkled with the finest wit—a wit which was as far superior to Sheridan's as his to the gambols of the Clown, or the movements of Pantaloon; and his wit, how exuberant soever, still seemed to help on his argument, as well as to illustrate the meaning of the speaker. He was however, in the main, a serious, a persuasive speaker, whose words plainly flowed from deep and vehement, and long considered, and well weighed, feelings of the heart. Erat summa gravitas; erat cum gravitate junctus facetiarum et urbanitatis oratorius non scurrilis lepos. Latine loquendi accurata et sine molestiâ diligens elegantia. (*Cic. Brut.*)

The rock on which he so often made shipwreck in debate, and still oftener in council or action, was that love of paradox, on which the tide of his exuberant ingenuity naturally carried him, as it does many others, who, finding so much more may be said in behalf of an untenable position than at first sight appeared possible

to themselves, or than ordinary minds can at any time apprehend, begin to bear with the erroneous dogma, and end by adopting it.*

"They first endure, then pity, then embrace."

So he was, from the indomitable bravery of his disposition, and his loathing of everything mean, or that savoured of truckling to mere power, not unfrequently led to prefer a course of conduct, or a line of argument, because of their running counter to public opinion or the general feeling; instead of confining his disregard to popularity within just bounds, and holding on his course in pursuit of truth and right, in spite of its temporary disfavour with the people. With these errors there was generally much truth mingled, or at least much that was manifestly wrong tinged the tenets or the conduct he was opposing; yet he was not the less an unsafe councillor, and in debate a dangerous ally. His conduct on the Volunteer question, the interference of the City with Military Rewards, the Amusements of the People, and Cruelty to Animals, afforded instances of this mixed description, where he was led into error by resisting almost equal error on the opposite hand; yet do these questions also afford proof of the latter part of the foregoing proposition; for what sound or rational view could justify his hostility to all voluntary defence, his reprobation of all expression of public gratitude for the services of our soldiers and sailors, his unqualified defence of bull-baiting, his resistance of all checks upon cruelty towards the brute creation? Upon other subjects of still graver import his paradoxes stood prominent and mischievous; unredeemed by ingenuity, unpalliated by opposite exaggeration, and even unmitigated by any admixture of truth. He defended the Slave Trade, which he had at first opposed, only because the French Royalists were injured by the revolt which their own

* They who have been engaged in professional business with the late Mr. John Clerk (afterwards Lord Eldon), may recollect how often that great lawyer was carried away to entertain paradoxical opinions exactly by the process here described.

follies had occasioned in St. Domingo; he resisted all mitigation of our Criminal Law, only because it formed a part of our antiquated jurisprudence, like trial by battle, nay, by ordeal of fire and water; and he opposed every project for Educating the People. It required all men's tenderness towards undoubted sincerity and clear disinterestedness to think charitably of such pernicious heresies in such a man. It demanded all this charity and all this faith in the spotless honour of his character, to believe that such opinions could really be the convictions of a mind like his. It was the greatest tribute which could be paid to his sterling merit, his fine parts, his rare accomplishments, and, in spite of such wild aberrations, he was still admired and beloved.

To convey any notion of his oratory by giving passages of his speeches is manifestly impossible. Of the mixed tenderness and figure in which he sometimes indulged, his defence of the military policy pursued by him while in office against the attempts made to change it the year after, might be mentioned; the fine speech, especially, in which, on taking leave of the subject, after comparing the two plans of recruiting our army to a dead stick thrust into the ground and a living sapling planted to take root in the soil, he spoke of carving his name upon the tree as lovers do when they would perpetuate the remembrance of their passions or their misfortunes. Of his happy allusions to the writings of kindred spirits, an example, but not at all above their average merit, is afforded in his speech upon the peace of Amiens, when he answered the remarks upon the uselessness of the Royal title, then given up, of King of France, by citing the bill of costs brought in by Dean Swift against Marlborough, and the comparative account of the charges of a Roman triumph, where the crown of laurel is set down at twopence. But sometimes he would convulse the House by a happy, startling, and most unexpected allusion; as when, on the Walcheren question, speaking of a *coup-de-main* on Antwerp, which had been its professed object, he suddenly said, "A *coup-de-main* in the Scheldt! You might as well talk of a *coup-de-main* in the Court of Chancery."

Sir William Grant having just entered and taken his seat, probably suggested this excellent jest; and assuredly no man enjoyed it more. His habitual gravity was overpowered in an instant, and he was seen absolutely to roll about on the bench which he had just occupied. So a word or two, artistly introduced, would often serve him to cover the adverse argument with ridicule. When arguing that they who would protect animals from cruelty have more on their hands than they are aware of, and that they cannot stop at preventing cruelty, but must also prohibit killing, he was met by the old answer, that we kill them to prevent them overrunning the earth, and then he said in passing, and, as it were, parenthetically—"An indifferent reason, by the way, for destroying fish." His two most happy and picturesque, though somewhat caricatured, descriptions of Mr. Pitt's diction, have been already mentioned; that it was a state-paper style, and that he believed he could speak a King's speech off-hand. His gallantry in facing all attacks was shown daily; and how little he cared for allusions to the offensive expressions treasured up against him, and all the more easily remembered, because of the epigrams in which he had embalmed them, might be seen from the way he himself would refer to them, as if not wishing they should be forgotten. When some phrase of his, long after it was first used, seemed to invite attack, and a great cheer followed, as if he had unwittingly fallen into the scrape, he stopped, and added, "Why, I said it on purpose!" or, as he pronounced it, "a purpose;" for no man more delighted in the old pronunciation, as well as the pure Saxon idiom of our language, which yet he could enrich and dignify with the importations of classical phraseology.

From what has been said of Mr. Windham's manner of speaking, as well as of his variously embellished mind, it will readily be supposed that in society he was destined to shine almost without a rival. His manners were the most polished, and noble, and courteous, without the least approach to pride, or affectation, or condescension; his spirits were, in advanced life, so gay, that he was always younger than the youngest of his company; his

relish of conversation was such, that after lingering to the latest moment he joined whatever party a sultry evening (or morning, as it might chance to prove,) tempted to haunt the streets before retiring to rest. How often have we accompanied him to the door of his own mansion, and then been attended by him to our own, while the streets rang with the peals of his hearty merriment, or echoed the accents of his refined and universal wit! But his conversation, or grave, or gay, or argumentative, or discursive; whether sifting a difficult subject, or painting an interesting character, or pursuing a merely playful fancy, or lively to very drollery, or pensive and pathetic, or losing itself in the clouds of metaphysics, or vexed with paradox, or plain and homely, and all but common-place, was that which, to be understood, must have been listened to: and while over the whole was flung a veil of unrent classical elegance, through no crevice, had there been any, would ever an unkind or ill-conditioned sentiment have found entrance!

> "Scilicet omne sacrum mors importuna profanat
> Omnibus obscuras injicit ille manus—
> Ossa quieta precor, tutâ requiescite in urnâ;
> Et sit humus cineri non onerosa tuo!"*

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* Relentless death each purer form profanes,
Round all that's fair his dismal arms he throws—
Light lie the earth that shrouds thy loved remains,
And softly slumbering may they taste repose!

MR. DUNDAS.

If we turn from those whose common principles and party connexions range them against Mr. Pitt, to the only effectual supporter whom he could rely upon as a colleague on the Treasury Bench, we shall certainly find ourselves contemplating a personage of very inferior pretensions, although one whose powers were of the most useful description. Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, had no claim whatever to those higher places among the orators of his age, which were naturally filled by the great men whom we have been describing; nor indeed could he be deemed *inter oratorum numerum* at all. He was a plain, business-like speaker; a man of every-day talents in the House; a clear, easy, fluent, and, from much practice, as well as strong and natural sense, a skilful debater; successful in profiting by an adversary's mistakes; distinct in opening a plan, and defending a Ministerial proposition; capable of producing even a great effect upon his not unwilling audience by his broad and course appeals to popular prejudices, and his confident statements of fact—those statements which Sir Francis Burdett once happily observed, "men fall into through an inveterate habit of official assertion." In his various offices no one was more useful. He was an admirable man of business; and those professional habits which he had brought from the bar (where he practised long enough for a youth of his fortunate family to reach the highest official place) were not more serviceable to him in making his speeches perspicuous, and his reasoning logical, than they were in disciplining his mind to the drudgery of the desk, and helping him to systematise, as well as to direct, the machinery of his department. After quitting the profession of the law, to which, indeed, he had for some of the later years of Lord North's Administration only nominally belonged, and leaving also the office of Lord Ad-

vocate, which he retained for several years after, he successively filled the place of Minister for India, for the Home and War Departments, and for Naval Affairs. But it was in the first of these capacities, while at the head of the India Board, and while Chairman of the Committee of the Commons upon India, that his great capacity for affairs shone chiefly forth: and that he gave solid and long-continued proof of an indefatigable industry, which neither the distractions of debate in Parliament, nor the convivial habits of the man and of the times ever could interrupt or relax. His celebrated Reports upon all the complicated questions of our Asiatic policy, although they may not stand a comparison with some of Mr. Burke's, in the profundity and enlargement of general views, any more than their style can be compared with his, are nevertheless performances of the greatest merit, and repositories of information upon that vast subject, unrivalled for clearness and extent. They, together with Lord Wellesley's Despatches, form the sources from which the bulk of all the knowledge possessed upon Indian matters is to be derived by the statesmen of the present day.

If in his official departments, and in the contests of Parliament, Mr. Dundas rendered able service, and possessed great weight, it was in Scotland, his native country, whose language he spoke, and whose whole affairs he directed, that his power and his authority chiefly prevailed. Before the reform in our representation and our municipal institutions, the undisturbed possession of patronage by a leading member of the Government, was very sure to carry along with it a paramount influence, both over the representatives of this ancient kingdom and over their constituents. Why the submission to men in high place, and endowed with the power of conferring many favours, should have been so much more absolute in the northern than in the southern parts of our island, it would be needless to inquire. Whether it arose from the old feudal habits of the nation, or from its poverty, joined with a laudable ambition to rise in the world above the pristine station, or from the wary and provident character of the people;

certain it is that they displayed a devotion for their political superiors, and a belief in their infallibility, which would have done no discredit to the clansmen of those chieftains who, whilom both granted out the lands of the sept, retained the stipulated services of the vassal, and enjoyed the rights of jurisdiction and of punishment whereby obedience was secured, and zealous attachment stimulated in its alliance with wholesome terror.

That Mr. Dundas enjoyed this kind of ministerial sovereignty and received this homage in a more ample measure than any of his predecessors, was, no doubt, owing partly to the unhesitating and unqualified determination which regulated his conduct, of devoting his whole patronage to the support of his party, and to the extent of that patronage, from his being so long Minister for India, as well as having the whole Scottish preferment at his absolute disposal; but it was also in part owing to the engaging qualities of the man. A steady and determined friend, who only stood the faster by those that wanted him the more; nay, who even in their errors and their faults would not give up his adherents: an agreeable companion, from the joyous hilarity of his manners; void of all affectation, all pride, all pretension; a kind and affectionate man in the relations of private life; and although not always sufficiently regardful of strict decorum in certain particulars, yet never putting on the Pharisee's garb, or affecting a more "gracious state" than he had attained; friendly, self-denying to those inferiors in his department whose comforts so much depended upon him; in his demeanour hearty and good-humoured to all—it is difficult to figure any one more calculated to win over those whom his mere power and station had failed to attach; or better fitted to retain the friends whom accident or influence might originally have attached to his person. That he should for so many years have disposed of the votes in Parliament of nearly the whole Scottish commoners, and the whole Peers, was, therefore, little to be wondered at; that his popularity and influence in the country at large should have been boundless during all this period, is as easily to be understood. There was then

no doubt ever raised of the ministry's stability, or of Mr. Dundas's ample share in the dispensation of its favours. The political sky was clear and settled to the very verge of the horizon. There was nothing to disturb the hearts of anxious mortals. The wary and pensive Scot felt sure of his election, if he but kept by the true faith; and his path lay straight before him—the path of righteous devotion leading unto a blessed preferment. But our Northern countrymen were fated to be visited by some troubles. The heavens became overcast; their luminary was for a while concealed from devout eyes; in vain they sought him, but he was not. Uncouth names began to be named. More than two parties were talked of. Instead of the old, convenient, and intelligible alternative of "Pitt or Fox"—"place or poverty,"—which left no doubt in any rational mind which of the two to choose, there was seen—strange sight!—hateful and perplexing omen!—a Ministry without Pitt, nay, without Dundas, and an Opposition leaning towards its support. Those who are old enough to remember that dark interval, may recollect how the public mind in Scotland was subdued with awe, and how men awaited in trembling silence the uncertain event, as all living things quail during the solemn pause that precedes an earthquake.

It was in truth a crisis to try men's souls. For a while all was uncertainty and consternation; all were seen fluttering about like birds in an eclipse or a thunder-storm; no man could tell whom he might trust; nay, worse still, no man could tell of whom he might ask anything. It was hard to say, not who were in office, but who were likely to remain in office. All true Scots were in dismay and distraction. It might truly be said they knew not which way to look, or whither to turn. Perhaps it might be yet more truly said, that they knew not *when* to turn. But such a crisis was too sharp to last; it passed away; and then was to be seen a proof of Mr. Dundas's power amongst his countrymen, which transcended all expectation, and almost surpassed belief, if indeed it is not rather to be viewed as an evidence of the acute foresight—the political second-sight

—of the Scottish nation. The trusty band in both Houses actually were found adhering to him against the existing Government; nay, he held the proxies of many Scottish peers in open opposition! Well might his colleague exclaim to the hapless Addington in such unheard-of troubles, "Doctor, the Thanes fly from us!" When the very Scotch Peers wavered, and when the Grampian hills might next be expected to move about, it was time to think that the end of all things was at hand; and the return of Pitt and security, and patronage and Dundas, speedily ensued to bless old Scotland, and reward her providence or her fidelity—her attachment at once to her patron, and to herself.

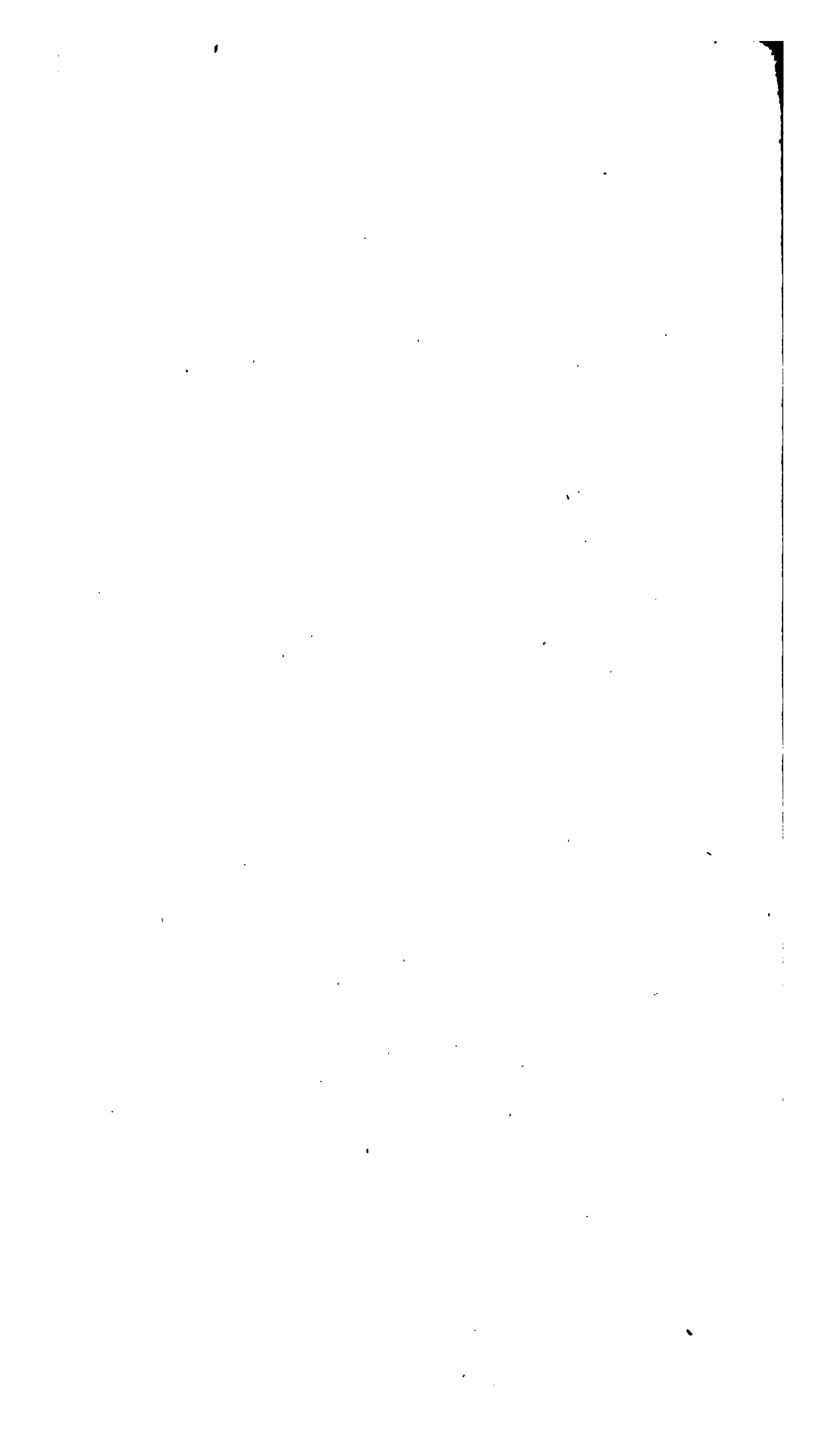
The subject of Lord Melville cannot be left complete without some mention of the event which finally deprived him of place and of power, though it hardly ever lowered him in the respect and affections of his countrymen. We allude, of course, to the Resolutions carried by Mr. Whitbread on the 8th of April, 1805, with the Speaker's casting voice, which led to the immediate resignation, and subsequent impeachment of this distinguished person. Mr. Pitt defended him strenuously, and only was compelled to abandon his friend and colleague, by the vote of the Commons, which gave him a "bitter pang," that as he pronounced the word made the hall resound, and seems yet to fill the ear. But after his death, while the Government was in his rival's hands, and all the offices of the State were filled with the enemies of the accused, Lord Melville was brought to trial before his Peers, and by a large majority acquitted, to the almost universal satisfaction of the country. Have we any right to regard him as guilty after this proceeding? It is true that the spirit of party is charged with the event of this memorable trial; but did nothing of that spirit preside over the proceedings in the Commons, the grand inquest of the nation, which made the presentment, and put the accused upon his trial? That Lord Melville was a careless man and wholly indifferent about money, his whole life had shown. That he had replaced the entire sum temporarily used, was part

even of the statement which charged him with misemploying it. That Mr. Pitt, whom no one ever accused of corruption, had been a party to two of his supporters using four times as much of the public money for a time, and without paying interest, was soon after proved; though for the purpose of pressing more severely upon Lord Melville, a great alacrity was shown to acquit the Prime Minister, by way of forming contrast to the Treasurer of the Navy. In a word, the case proved against him was not by any means so clear as to give us the right to charge the great majority of his Peers with corrupt and dishonourable conduct in acquitting him; while it is a known fact that the Judges who attended the trial were, with the exception of the Lord Chief Justice, all clearly convinced of his innocence. Nor, let it be added, would the charge against him have been deemed, in the times of the Harleys and the Walpoles, of a nature to stain his character. Witness Walpole rising to supreme power after being expelled the House of Commons for corruption; and after having only urged in his own defence, that the thousand pounds paid to him by a contractor had been for the use of a friend, whom he desired to favour, and to whom he had paid it all over; not to mention his having received above seventeen thousand pounds, under circumstances of the gravest suspicion the day before he quitted office, and which he never seems to have accounted for, except by saying he had the King's authority to take it.* It is very certain that

* Mr. Coxe in his life of Walpole, cannot, of course, put the defence on higher ground than Walpole himself took, as to the 1000*l.* received on the contract, in 1711, when he was Secretary at War. As to the sum reported by the House of Commons' Committee (17,461*l.*) to have been obtained by him in 1712, on the authority of two Treasury orders, the biographer's chief argument is, that the money must have been immediately wanted for the public purposes, though these never were particularized, and that the king must have approved of the draft, because he signed the warrants. A weaker efence cannot well be conceived; nor is it much aided by the assertion which follows, that Sir Robert began writing a vindication of himself, which he broke off "on a conviction that his answer must either have been materially defective, or he must have related many things highly improper to be exposed to the public." The

these remarks will give little satisfaction to those whose political principles have always kept them apart from, and inimical to, Lord Melville. But to what purpose have men lived for above thirty years after the trial, and survived the object of the charge more than a quarter of a century, if they cannot now, and upon a mere judicial question, permit their judgments to have a free scope,—deciding calmly upon events that belong to the history of the past, and involve the reputation of the dead?

fact of a man, with an estate of about 2000*l.* a-year at first, and which never rose to much above 4000*l.*, having lived extravagantly, and amassed above 200,000*l.*, is not at all explained by Mr. Coxe; and it is mainly on this expensive living and accumulation of fortune, that the suspicions which hang over his memory rest. But it is needless to say more upon a topic which could form no justification of Lord Melville, if he were guilty. The subject is only alluded to in this place for the purpose of showing how much more pure our public men now are, and how much higher is our standard of official virtue. The acquittal of Lord Melville was deemed insufficient to sanction his restoration to office; although Sir Robert Walpole, without any attempt to rescind the vote of 1712, was afterwards advanced to the place of Prime Minister, and held it for twenty years.



MR. ERSKINE.

The Ministry of Mr. Pitt did not derive more solid service from the Bar in the person of Mr. Dundas, than the Opposition party did ornament and popularity in that of Mr. Erskine. His parliamentary talents, although they certainly have been underrated, were as clearly not the prominent portion of his character. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, had he appeared in any other period than the age of the Foxes, the Pitts, and the Burkes, there is little chance that he would have been eclipsed even as a debater; and the singular eloquence and powerful effect of his famous speech against the Jesuits' Bark Bill in the House of Lords* abundantly proves this position. He never appears to have given his whole mind to the practice of debating; he had a very scanty provision of political information; his time was always occupied with the laborious pursuits of his profession; he came into the House of Commons, where he stood among several equals, and behind some superiors from a stage where he shone alone, and without a rival; above all, he was accustomed to address a select and friendly audience, bound to lend him their patient attention, and to address them by the compulsion of his retainer, not as a volunteer coming forward in his own person; a position from which the transition is violent and extreme, to that of having to gain and to keep a promiscuous and, in great part, hostile audience, not under any obligation to listen one instant beyond the time during which the speaker can flatter, or interest, or amuse them. Earlier practice and more devotion to the pursuit, would doubtless have vanquished all these disadvantages; but they sufficed to keep Mr. Erskine always in a station far beneath his talents, as long as he remained in the House of Commons.

* 1808.

It is to the forum, and not the Senate, that we must hasten, if we would witness the "coronam multiplicem, judicium erectum, crebras assensiones, multas admirationes, risum cum velit, cum velit fletum, in Scenâ Roscium;" in fine, if we should see this great man in his element, and in his glory. Nor let it be deemed trivial, or beneath the historian's province, to mark that noble figure, every look of whose countenance is expressive, every motion of whose form graceful; an eye that sparkles and pierces, and almost assures victory, while it "speaks audience ere the tongue." Juries have declared that they felt it impossible to remove their looks from him when he had riveted, and, as it were, fascinated them by his first glance; and it used to be a common remark of men who observed his motions, that they resembled those of a blood-horse; as light, as limber, as much betokening strength and speed, as free from all gross superfluity or incumbrance. Then hear his voice of surpassing sweetness, clear, flexible, strong, exquisitely fitted to strains of serious earnestness, deficient in compass, indeed, and much less fitted to express indignation or even scorn than pathos, but wholly free from either harshness or monotony. All these, however, and even his chaste, dignified, and appropriate action, were very small parts of this wonderful advocate's excellence. He had a thorough knowledge of men—of their passions and their feelings—he knew every avenue to the heart, and could at will make all its chords vibrate to his touch. His fancy, though never playful in public, where he had his whole faculties under the most severe control, was lively and brilliant; when he gave it vent and scope, it was eminently sportive; but while representing his client, it was wholly subservient to that in which his whole soul was wrapped up, and to which each faculty of body and of mind was subdued, the success of the cause. His argumentative powers were of the highest order; clear in his statements, close in his applications, unwearied and never to be diverted in his deductions; with a quick and sure perception of his point, and undeviating in the pursuit of whatever established it; endued with a nice dis-

cernment of the relative importance and weight of different arguments, and the faculty of assigning to each its proper place, so as to bring forward the main body of the reasoning in bold relief, and with its full breadth, and not weaken its effect by distracting and disturbing the attention of the audience among lesser particulars. His understanding was eminently legal; though he had never made himself a great lawyer, yet could he conduct a purely legal argument with the most perfect success; and his familiarity with all the ordinary matters of his profession was abundantly sufficient for the purposes of the forum. His memory was accurate and retentive in an extraordinary degree; nor did he ever, during the trial of a cause, forget any matter, how trifling soever, that belonged to it. His presence of mind was perfect in action, that is, before the jury, when a line is to be taken upon the instant, and a question risked to a witness, or a topic chosen with the tribunal, on which the whole fate of the cause may turn. No man made fewer mistakes; none left so few advantages unimproved; before none was it so dangerous for an adversary to slumber and be off his guard; for he was ever broad awake himself, and was as adventurous as he was skilful; and as apt to take advantage of any the least opening, as he was cautious to leave none in his own battle.

But to all these qualities he joined that fire, that spirit, that courage, which gave vigour and direction to the whole, and bore down all resistance. No man, with all his address and prudence, ever adventured upon more bold figures, and they were uniformly successful; for his imagination was vigorous enough to sustain any flight; his taste was correct, and even severe, and his execution felicitous in the highest degree. Without much familiar knowledge of even the Latin classics; with hardly any access to the beauties of the Attic eloquence, whether in prose or verse; with no skill in modern languages, his acquaintance with the English tongue was yet so perfect, and his taste so exquisite, that nothing could exceed the beauty of his diction, whatever subject he attempted; whether discoursing on the most humble topics, of the most ordinary case in court or in

society, or defending men for their lives, under the persecution of tyrannical power, wrestling against the usurpations of Parliament in favour of the liberty of the press, and upholding against the assaults of the infidel the fabric of revealed religion. Indeed the beauty, as well as chaste simplicity, of the language in which he would clothe the most lowly subjects reminded the classical scholar of some narratives in the Odyssey, where there is not one idea that rises above the meanest level, and yet all is made graceful and elegant by the magic of the diction. Aware that his classical acquirements were so slender, men oftentimes marvelled at the phenomenon of his eloquence, above all, of his composition. The solution of the difficulty lay in the constant reading of the old English authors to which he devoted himself; Shakspeare he was more familiar with than almost any man of his age; and Milton he nearly had by heart. Nor can it be denied that the study of the speeches in "Paradise Lost," is as good a substitute as can be found for the immortal originals in the Greek models, upon which those great productions have manifestly been formed.

Such was his oratory; but oratory is only the half, and the lesser half of the *Nisi Prius* advocate; and Mr. Erskine never was known to fail in the more important moiety of the part he had to sustain. The entire devotion to his cause which made him reject everything that did not help it forward, and indignantly scorn all temptations to sacrifice its smallest point for any rhetorical triumph, was not the only virtue of his advocacy. His judgment was quick, sound, and sure, upon each successive step to be taken; his decision bold, but cautious and enlightened, at each turn. His speaking was hardly more perfect than his examination of witnesses, the art in which so much of an English advocate's skill is shown! and his examination-in-chief was as excellent as his cross-examination; a department so apt to deceive the vulgar, and which yet is, generally speaking, far less available, as it hardly ever is more difficult than the examination-in-chief, or in reply. In all these various functions, whether of addressing the

jury, or urging objections to the court, or examining his own witnesses, or cross-examining his adversary's, this consummate advocate appeared to fill at one and the same time different characters; to act as the counsel and representative of the party, and yet to be the very party himself; while he addressed the tribunal, to be also acquainted with every feeling and thought of the judge or the jury; while he interrogated the witness, whether to draw from him all he knew and in the most favourable shape, or to shake and displace all he had said that was adverse, he appeared to have entered into the mind of the person he was dealing with, and to be familiar with all that was passing within it. It is by such means that the hearer is to be moved, and the truth ascertained; and he will ever be the most successful advocate who can approach the nearest to this lofty and difficult position.

The speeches of this great man are preserved to us with a care and correctness which those only of Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Mr. Canning, and Lord Dudley, among all the orators of whom this work treats, can boast. He had a great facility of composition; he wrote both much and correctly. The five volumes which remain were all revised by himself; most of them at the several times of their first publication. Mr. Windham, too, is known to have left most of his speeches written out correctly in his own hand. The same care was bestowed upon their speeches by the others just named. Neither those of Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt, nor, with one or two exceptions, of Mr. Sheridan, ever enjoyed the same advantages; and a most unfair estimate would therefore be formed of their eloquence, as compared with that of others, were men only to build their judgment upon the records which the Parliamentary Debates present.

Of Mr. Erskine's the first, beyond all doubt, was his speech for Stockdale, foolishly and oppressively prosecuted by the House of Commons, for publishing the Reverend Mr. Logan's eloquent tract upon Hastings's impeachment. There are no finer things in modern, and few finer in ancient eloquence than the celebrated passage of the Indian Chief; nor has beautiful language ever

been used with more curious felicity to raise a striking and an appropriate image before the mind, than in the simile of the winds "lashing before them the lazy elements, which without the tempest would stagnate into pestilence." The speeches on Constructive Treason are also noble performances; in which the reader never can forget the sublimity of the denunciation against those who took from the "file the sentence against Sidney, which should have been left on record to all ages, that it might arise and blacken in the sight, like the handwriting on the wall before the Eastern tyrant, to deter from outrages upon justice." One or two of the speeches upon Seduction, especially that for the defendant in *Howard* v. *Bingham*, are of exquisite beauty.

It remains that we commemorate the deeds which he did, and which cast the fame of his oratory into the shade. He was an undaunted man; he was an undaunted advocate. To no Court did he ever truckle, neither to the Court of the King, neither to the Court of the King's Judges. Their smiles and their frowns he disregarded alike in the fearless discharge of his duty. He upheld the liberty of the press against the one; he defended the rights of the people against both combined to destroy them. If there be yet amongst us the power of freely discussing the acts of our rulers; if there be yet the privilege of meeting for the promotion of needful reforms; if he who desires wholesome changes in our Constitution be still recognised as a patriot, and not doomed to die the death of a traitor; let us acknowledge with gratitude, that to this great man, under Heaven, we owe this felicity of the times. In 1794, his dauntless energy, his indomitable courage, kindling his eloquence, inspiring his conduct, giving direction and lending firmness to his matchless skill, resisted the combination of statesmen, and princes, and lawyers—the league of cruelty and craft, formed to destroy our liberties—and triumphantly scattered to the winds the half-accomplished scheme of an unsparing proscription. Before such a precious service as this, well may the lustre of statesmen and of orators grow pale; and yet this was the achievement of one only not the first orator of

his age, and not among its foremost statesmen, because he was beyond all comparison the most accomplished advocate, and the most eloquent, that modern times have produced.

The disposition and manners of the man were hardly less attractive than his genius and his professional skill were admirable. He was, like almost all great men, simple, natural, and amiable; full of humane feelings and kindly affections. Of wit, he had little or none in conversation; and he was too gay to take any delight in discussion; but his humour was playful to buoyancy, and wild even to extravagance; and he indulged his roaming and devious and abrupt imagination as much in society, as in public he kept it under rigorous control. That his private character was exempt from failings, can in no wise be affirmed. The egotism which was charged upon his conversation, and in which he only seemed to adopt the habit of forensic leaders of his time, was wholly unmixed with anything offensive to others; though it might excite a smile at his own expense. Far from seeking to raise himself by their depression, his vanity was of the best-natured and least selfish kind; it was wholly social and tolerant, and, as it were, gregarious; nay, he always seemed to extol the deeds of others with fully more enthusiasm than he ever displayed in recounting his own. But there were darker places to be marked, in the extreme imprudence with which some indulgences were sought, and unfortunate connexions, even late in life, formed. Lord Kenyon, who admired and loved him fervently, and used always to appear as vain of him as a schoolmaster of his favourite pupil, though himself rigorous to the point of ascetism, was wont to call these imperfections, viewing them tolerantly, "spots in the sun;" and it must with sorrow be added, that as the lustre of the luminary became more dim, the spots did not contract in their dimensions. The usual course on such occasions is to say, *Taceamus de his,*—but history neither asserts her greatest privilege, nor discharges her higher duties, when, dazzled by brilliant genius, or astonished by splendid triumphs, or even softened by amiable qualities, she abstains from mark-

ing those defects which so often degrade the most sterling worth, and which the talents and the affections that they accompany may sometimes seduce men to imitate.

The striking and imposing appearance of this great man's person has been mentioned. His Herculean strength of constitution may also be noted. During the eight-and-twenty years that he practised at the bar, he never was prevented for one hour from attending to his professional duties. At the famous State Trials in 1794, he lost his voice on the evening before he was to address the Jury. It returned to him just in time, and this, like other felicities of his career, he always ascribed to a special providence, with the habitually religious disposition of mind which was hereditary in the godly families that he sprung from.

MR. PERCEVAL,

A PERSON of great eminence, who, like Mr. Erskine, arose from the Bar, where, however, he never distinguished himself much. Mr. Perceval was a man of very quick parts, much energy of character, dauntless courage, joined to patient industry, practised fluency as a speaker, great skill and readiness as a debater; but of no information beyond what a classical education gives the common run of English youths. Of views upon all things the most narrow, upon religious and even political questions the most bigoted and intolerant, his range of mental vision was confined in proportion to his ignorance on all general subjects. Within that sphere he saw with extreme acuteness,—as the mole is supposed to be more sharp-sighted than the eagle for half a quarter of an inch before it; but as beyond the limits of his little horizon he saw no better than the mole, so like her, he firmly believed, and always acted on the belief, that beyond what he could descry nothing whatever existed; and he mistrusted, dreaded, and even hated all who had an ampler visual range than himself. But here, unhappily, all likeness ceases between the puny animal and the powerful statesman. Beside the manifest sincerity of his convictions, attested, perhaps, by his violence and rancour, he possessed many qualities, both of the head and the heart, which strongly recommended him to the confidence of the English people. He never scared them by refinements, nor alarmed their fears by any sympathy with improvements out of the old and beaten track; and he shared largely in all their favourite national prejudices. A devoted adherent of the Crown, and a pious son of the Church, he was dear to all who celebrate their revels by libations to Church and King—most of whom regard the clergy as of far more importance than the gospel—all of whom are well enough disposed to set the

monarch above the law. Add to this, the accidental qualifications of high birth, in a family excessively attached to the Court and the Establishment, and still more the real virtues which adorned his character; a domestic life without stain, an exemplary discharge of the duties that devolve on the father of a numerous family, a punctual performance of all his obligations, a temper which, though quick and even irritable, was generally good, a disposition charitable and kind where the rancour of party or sect left his nature free scope. From all sordid feeling he was entirely exempt—regardless of pecuniary interest—careless of mere fortune—aiming at power alone—and only suffering his ambition to be restrained by its intermixture with his fiery zeal for the success of his cherished principles, religious and civil. The whole character thus formed, whether intellectual or moral, was eminently fitted to command the respect and win the favour of a nation whose prejudices are numerous and deep-rooted, and whose regard for the decencies of private life readily accepts a strict observance of them as a substitute for almost any political defect, and a compensation for many political crimes.

The eloquence of Mr. Perceval, any more than his capacity, was not of the highest order; although, like his capacity, it was always strenuously exerted, and sometimes extremely powerful. He was a person of acute and quick rather than of great faculties. At the bar his success was assured, if he had not deviated into politics; giving a rival to that mistress which is jealous to excess of the least infidelity in her suitor. The nimbleness of mind and industry of application which then distinguished him, he brought into the House of Commons, and, differing from other lawyers, he was always so lively as to be heard without any effort in a place far enough from being enamoured with the gown. As Attorney-general to Mr. Addington, and bearing almost the whole burden of the unequal debate, while the forces of Fox, Pitt, and Windham combined to assail the meagre Treasury Bench, his talents sparkled with peculiar brightness. His dexterity in any great or any

personal conflict; his excellent language, always purely but unaffectedly English, nor ever chargeable with incorrect taste; his attention constantly awake, and his spirit ever dauntless, nay, rather rising with the emergency—gained him the greatest reputation as a ready and a powerful debater. When, quitting the profession in 1807, and taking the lead of the House of Commons, he appeared as the first minister in all but name, and afterwards, on the Duke of Portland's death, had the title with the functions of Premier, his success was inferior; and he did not for some time act up to the reputation which he had gained in the subordinate and half-professional station.

But the debates upon the Regency in 1811, when he fought, almost single handled, a battle for royal prerogative against constitutional principle; with the prospect of the Regent being his principal opponent, as his original connexion with Queen Caroline had made him his implacablé enemy—these contests drew forth all his abilities, and placed him at once in the highest rank of debaters. His party too were popular in the country, fond of Kings, particularly attached to George III., distrustful and averse towards his successor, above all, deeply revering the Established Church, whose selected and zealous champion the minister had long been. His manner of speaking, familiar, though quick, lively, smart, yet plain upon the whole, and offending no one by figures or by tropes, was exceedingly popular in the House of Commons, where the dullest have no dislike to an acute and clear leader, so he be not over brilliant and witty. He was a man of business, too, in all his habits, both of living and of speaking; opening a dry question of finance or regulation with as great spirit as he would reply to a personal attack: above all, his gallantry in debate well fitted him for a leader. Whoever might quail before a powerful adversary, or faint under the pressure of a bad cause, or take fright in a storm of popular contention and even indignation, he was none of these; rather the louder raged the tempest, so much the shriller rose the voice that called his forces together, and united them for the work of the day,

whether to face the enemy or to weather the gale. Even in 1809, when the firmness of the Royal family and the Ministry was sorely tried—but, above all, of him, a pattern of morality, a strict observer of ordinances, a somewhat intolerant exacter of piety in others, of him who, beyond all men, must have found it hard to face the moral or religious indignation of the whole country, roused by the veil being, for a moment, torn rudely aside, which had hitherto covered over the tender immoralities of Royal life—even then the person most likely to be struck down by the blast was the first to face it, and to struggle on manfully through the whole of that difficult crisis, as if he had never spoken of the Church, and the moral law, and wives, and children, and domestic ties, and the profligacy of courts,—as if the people, of all sects, and all classes, were looking on, the calm spectators of an ordinary debate. The public voice rendered him, on this occasion, the justice ever done to men who show, in performing their duty, that they have the courage to disregard clamour, and to rely upon their reputation as a shield against misconstruction. No stain rested upon his character from his gallant defence of the Duke of York; and they who were successful in attacking the fair fame of the Prince, failed in all their attempts to blacken his official defender. In the next Session, he met Parliament with a Ministry crippled by the loss of both Mr. Canning's eloquence, and Lord Castlereagh's manly courage, and long experience of affairs,—met it too, after such a signal calamity as never before had attended any failure of the Government in its military operations. But he again presented the same undaunted front to all perils; and having happily obtained the co-operation of Lord Wellesley, and continuing to enjoy the benefit of his illustrious brother's victories, he again triumphed over all opposition, until the Prince Regent's desertion of his friends seemed to give the Tory party a lease of their places during his life.

This eminent person's career was cut short while in the midst of the most difficult struggle of all in which he was fated to engage. The influence of his friend

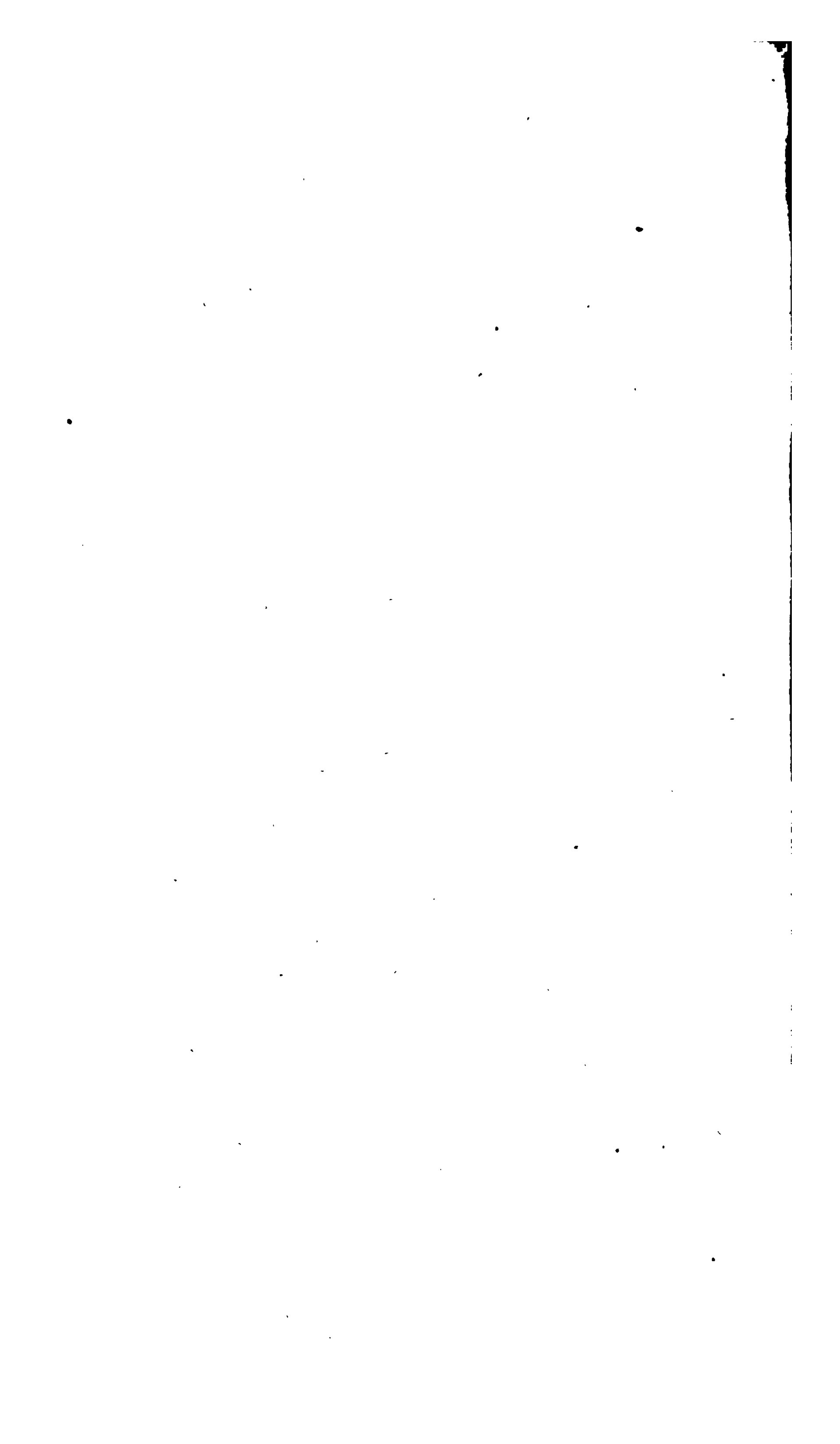
Mr. Stephen over his mind was unbounded. Agreeing on all political questions, and alike in the strength of their religious feelings, although the one leant towards the High Church party, and the other was a Low Churchman, upon all questions connected with neutral rights, he in an especial manner deferred to the opinion of him whose professional life had been chiefly passed in the discussion of them. Accordingly, the measure of the Orders in Council, devised by him, was readily adopted by the minister, who, never giving either his support or his opposition by halves, always flung himself into any cause which he espoused with as much zeal as if it were his own. Add to this, his hearty and deep-rooted hatred of Napoleon, whom he regarded with the true feelings of the people, as he accurately represented their national prejudices—his scorn of the Americans, whom he disliked with the animosity peculiar to all the courtiers of George III.—his truly English feeling in favour of obtaining through the war a monopoly of all trade, and bringing into London and Bristol the commerce of the world—all these desires were gratified, and these feelings, indulged by a system which, under the mask of retaliation upon France, professed to extinguish, or to absorb into our own commerce, the trade of all the neutrals whom France had oppressed in order to injure us; and Mr. Perceval thus became as strenuous a champion of this unjust and preposterous plan as its author himself. In 1808 he had prevailed with Parliament to give it a full trial; and in four years, instead of collecting all the trade of the world into England, it had effectually ruined whatever Napoleon's measures had left of our own.

Accordingly, a motion was carried at the end of April, 1812, for examining the question in a committee of the whole House, and in taking the evidence which was adduced to show the ruinous effects of the system, he, with Mr. Stephen, bore night after night the principal part. As they both hoped that the clamour out of doors would subside if time were given, the struggle always was to put off the inquiry, and thus to protract the decision; and Messrs. Brougham and Baring, who con-

ducted it, with some difficulty prevailed so far as to begin the examination of the witnesses exactly at half past four o'clock. On the 11th of May, Mr. Perceval had been later than the appointed time, and after complaining of this delay, Mr. Brougham, at a quarter before five, had called his first witness, and was examining him, when a messenger deputed to bring the minister, met him walking towards the House with Mr. Stephen arm-in-arm. He instantly, with his accustomed activity, darted forward to obey the summons, but for which Mr. Stephen, who happened to be on his left side, would have been the victim of the assassin's blow, which prostrated Mr. Perceval as he entered the lobby. The wretched man, by name Bellingham, had no kind of quarrel with him; but complained of a suit at Petersburgh having been neglected by our ambassador there, Lord Grenville, whom he intended to have destroyed, had not Mr. Perceval fallen first in his way. He never attempted to escape; but was taken, committed, tried, condemned, executed, dissected, all within one week from the time that he fired the shot. So great an outrage upon justice never was witnessed in modern times; for the application to delay the trial, until evidence of his insanity could be brought from Liverpool, was refused, and the trial proceeded, while both the court, the witnesses, the jury, and the people, were under the influence of the feelings naturally excited by the deplorable slaughter of one of the most eminent and virtuous men in any rank of the community.

It has been said already that Mr. Perceval was both imperfectly educated and very narrow-minded. He was the slave of violent prejudices, and had never made any effort to shake them off, or to mitigate them by instructing himself in any of the branches of learning out of his own profession, save only that he had the ordinary portion of classical learning which all English gentlemen acquire in their early youth. How amiable soever in private life, he was intolerant of others who differed with him in the proportion of his ignorance, and committed the error of all such conscientious but bigoted men, the forgetting that those of opposite sentiments

have exactly the same excuse for unyielding obstinacy that they have for rooted dislike towards adverse doctrines. They feel all the heat of intolerance, but make no kind of allowance for others feeling somewhat of the fire which burns so fiercely within themselves.



LORD GRENVILLE.

The two eminent personages of whom we have been speaking were Mr. Pitt's contemporaries and political adherents, though of a less advanced age. But Lord Grenville was of his own standing, followed his fortune during the eventful period of the coalesced opposition and the first French war, left office with him in 1801, nor quitted him until he consented to resume it in 1804, preferring place to character, and leaving the Whigs, by whose help he had overthrown the Addington administration. From that moment Lord Grenville joined the Whig party, with whom to the end of his public life he continued to act.

A greater accession to the popular cause and the Whig party it was impossible to imagine, unless Mr. Pitt himself had persevered in his desire of rejoining the standard under which his first and noblest battles were fought. All the qualities in which their long opposition and personal habits made them deficient, Lord Grenville possessed in an eminent degree; long habits of business had matured his experience and disciplined his naturally vigorous understanding; a life studiously regular had surrounded him with the respect of his countrymen, and of those whom the dazzling talents of others could not blind to their loose propensities or idle talents; a firm attachment to the Church as by law established, attracted towards him the confidence of those who subscribe to its doctrines and approve its discipline; while his tried prudence and discretion, were a balance much wanted against the opposite defects of the Whig party, and especially of their most celebrated leader.

After Mr. Grattan, it would be difficult to point out any person to whom the great and fundamental question of Irish Policy, and the cause of religious liberty in

general, was so much indebted as Lord Grenville;* while in the sacrifices which he made to it, he certainly much exceeded Mr. Grattan himself. He was enabled to render this valuable service to his country, not more by his natural abilities, which were of a very high order —sound judgment, extraordinary memory, an almost preternatural power of application—and by the rich stores of knowledge which those eminent qualities had put him in possession of, than by the accidental circumstances in his previous history and present position—his long experience in office, which had tried and matured his talents in times of unexampled difficulty—his connexion with Mr. Pitt, both in the kindred of blood and of place, so well fitted to conciliate the Tory party, or at all events to disarm their hostility, and lull their suspicions—above all, the well-known and steady attachment of himself and his family to the principles and the establishment of the Church of England.

When, therefore, he quitted power with Mr. Pitt in 1801, rather than abandon the Catholic Emancipation, the carrying of which had only a year before been held out as one of the principal objects of the Union; and when, in 1804, he peremptorily refused to join Mr. Pitt in resuming office, unless a ministry should be formed upon a basis wide enough to comprehend the Whig party; the cause of liberal, tolerant principles, but, above all, the Irish question, gained an able supporter, whose alliance, whether his intrinsic or accidental qualities were considered, might justly be esteemed beyond all price. The friends of civil and religious liberty duly valued

* The plan of this work of course precludes all reference, at least all detailed reference, to the conduct and the merits of living statesmen. But for this an ample field would be opened, in which to expatiate upon the transcendent services of Lord Grey, and the ample sacrifices which he made, during the greater part of his political life, to the rights and the interests of the Irish people. Lord Wellesley's services in the same cause, it is also, for the same reason, impossible to enter upon further than to remind the reader that, after having almost begun life as the advocate of the Catholic claims, he, and after him Lord Anglesey, first set the example to succeeding Viceroys of ruling Ireland with the most perfect justice to all parties, and holding the balance of favour even, with a steady hand, between Catholic and Protestant, Churchman and Dissenter.

this most important accession; and the distinguished statesman whom they now accounted as one of their most powerful champions, and trusted as one of their most worthy leaders, amply repaid the confidence reposed in him, by the steady and disinterested devotion which, with his characteristic integrity and firmness, he gave to the cause. Taking office with Mr. Fox, and placed at the head of the government, upon the death of that great man he peremptorily, and with bare courtesy, rejected all the overtures of the King to separate from the Whigs, and rejoin his ancient allies of the Pitt school. Soon afterwards, in firm union with the remains of the Fox party, he carried the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and retired from power, rather than bind himself not to press the Catholic Emancipation upon the narrow-minded though conscientious Prince whom he served. Continuing in close alliance with the Whigs, he shared with them the frowns of the Court and the habitual exclusion from office which has, for the most part, been their portion in public life. Nor can it be doubted that the perseverance with which he abided by his declared opinions in favour of the Catholic Question alone prevented him from presiding over the councils of his country, during, at the least, twenty years of his life. They who have come to the aid of the liberal cause only when its success made an adhesion to it the road to Court favour, with all its accompaniments of profit and of power, have a very different account of mutual obligation to settle with their country, from that which Lord Grenville could at any time since his retirement have presented, but disdained ever even to hint at. But they who, after his powerful advocacy, his inflexible integrity, his heavy sacrifices, had all but carried the Irish question, have come forward to finish the good work, and have repeated every kind of gratification from doing their duty, instead of making a sacrifice of their interests like him, would do well, while they usurp all the glory of these successes, to recollect the men whose labours, requited with proscription, led the way to comparatively insignificant exertions, still more beneficial to the indi-

viduals that made them, than advantageous to the cause they served.

The endowments of this eminent statesman's mind were all of a useful and commanding sort—sound sense, steady memory, vast industry. His acquirements were in the same proportion valuable and lasting—a thorough acquaintance with business in its principles and in its details; a complete mastery of the science of politics, as well theoretical as practical; of late years a perfect familiarity with political economy, and a just appreciation of its importance; an early and most extensive knowledge of classical literature, which be improved instead of abandoning, down to the close of his life; a taste formed upon those chaste models, and of which his lighter compositions, his Greek and Latin verses, bore testimony to the very last. His eloquence was of a plain, masculine, authoritative cast, which neglected if it did not despise ornament, and partook in the least possible degree of fancy, while its declamation was often equally powerful with its reasoning and its statement.

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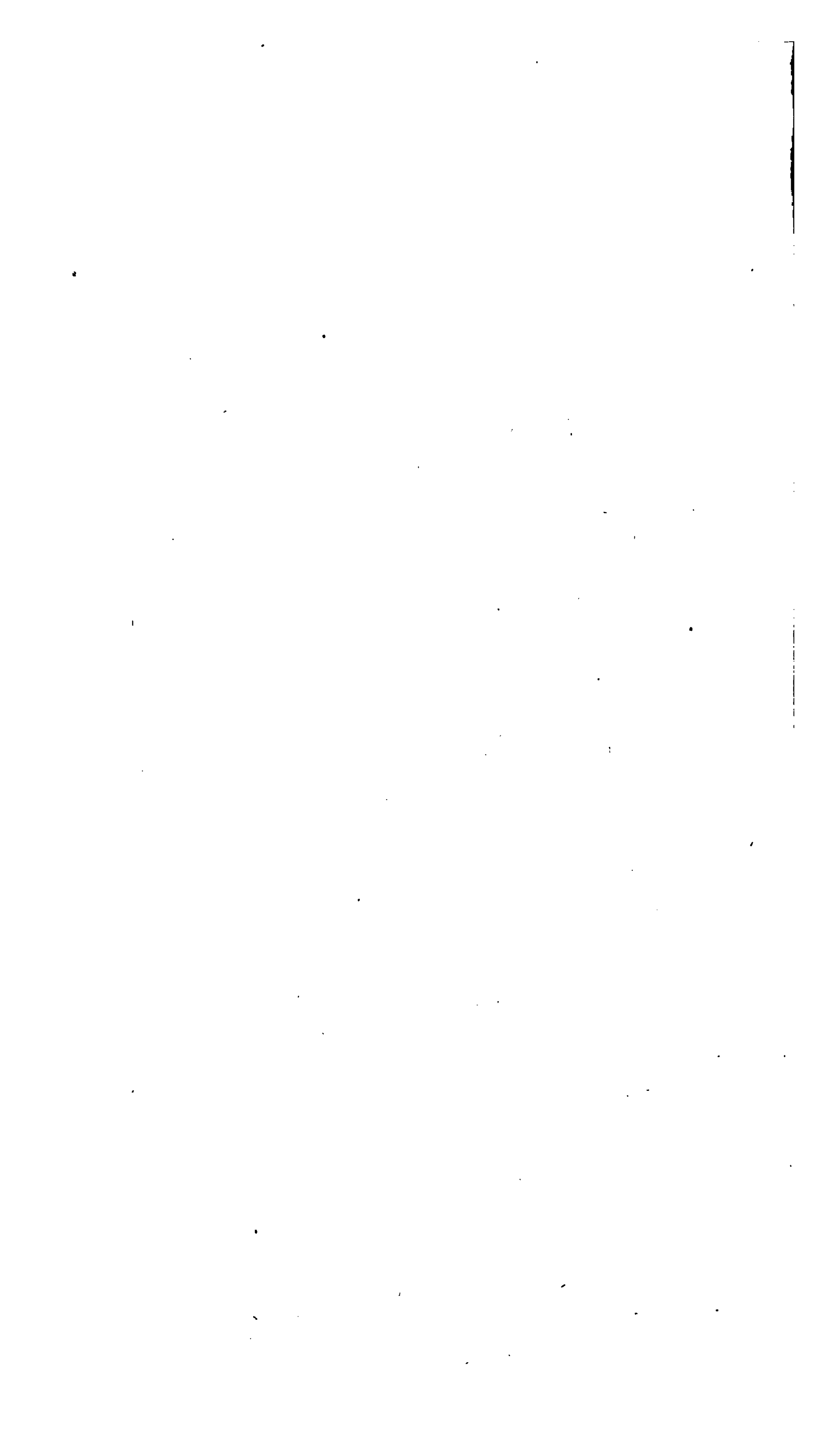


MR. GRATTAN.

The name which we mentioned as superior to even Lord Grenville in services to the Irish question, recalls to mind one of the greatest men of his age—Henry Grattan.

It would not be easy to point out any statesman or patriot, in any age of the world, whose fame stands higher for his public services; nor is it possible to name any one, the purity of whose reputation has been stained by so few faults, and the lustre of whose renown is dimmed by so few imperfections. From the earliest years at which he could appear upon the political stage, he devoted himself to state affairs. While yet in the prime of youth, he had achieved a victory which stands at the head of all the triumphs ever won by a patriot for his country in modern times; he had effected an important revolution in the Government, without violence of any kind, and had broken chains of the most degrading kind, by which the injustice and usurpation of three centuries had bound her down. Her immediate gratitude placed him in a situation of independence, which enabled him to consecrate the remainder of his days to her service, without the interruption arising from professional pursuits; and he continued to persevere in the same course of patriotism marked by a rare union of the moderation which springs from combined wisdom and virtue, with the firmness and the zeal which are peculiar to genius. No factious partisan, making devotion to the public cause a convenient and a safe mask for the attainment of his selfish interests, whether of sordid avarice or of crawling ambition, ever found in Grattan either an instrument or an accomplice. No true friend of the people, inspired with a generous desire of extirpating abuses, and of extending the reign of freedom, ever complained of Grattan's slowness to join the untarnished banner of patriotism. No advocate of human improve-

ment, filled with the sacred zeal of enlarging the enjoyments or elevating the condition of mankind, was ever damped in his aspirations by Grattan's coldness, or had reason to wish him less the advocate of Ireland and more the friend of his species.

The principal battle which he fought for his native country required him to embrace every great and difficult question of domestic policy; for the misrule and oppression exercised by England over the Irish people extended to all their commercial dealings, as well as to their political rights, and sought to fetter their trade by a complicated system of vexatious regulations, as well as to awe their legislators by an assumption of sovereignty, and to impose the fetters of a foreign jurisdiction upon the administration of justice itself. In no part of this vast and various field were Mr. Grattan's powers found to fail or his acquirements to prove deficient; and he handled the details of fiscal and of mercantile policy with as much accuracy and as great address as he brought to the discussion of the broader and easier, though more momentous subject—the great question of National Independence. He was left, on the achievement of his great triumph, in possession of as brilliant a reputation as a man could desire; and it was unsullied by any one act either of factious violence, or of personal meanness, or the inconsistency into which overmuch vehemence in the pursuit of praiseworthy objects is wont to betray even the most virtuous men. The popular favour which he enjoyed to so unexampled a degree, and in such unmeasured profusion, was in a short time destined to suffer an interruption, not unusual in the history of popular leaders; and for refusing to join in the designs, of a more than doubtful origin, of men inferior in reputation of every kind, and of a more than doubtful honesty—men who proscribed as unworthy of the people's esteem all that acknowledge any restraints of moderation—he lived to see himself denounced by the factious, reviled by the unprincipled, and abandoned by their dupes, the bulk of the very nation whose idol he had so lately been.

The war with France, and the fear of revolutionary

movements at home, rendered him for some years an alarmist; and he joined with those who supported the hostilities into which Mr. Pitt and the Portland seceders from the Whig party unhappily plunged the empire. But he carried his support of arbitrary measures at home a very short way compared with the new allies of the Government in England; and the proceedings of the Irish Ministry, during and after the rebellion, found in him an adversary as uncompromising as in the days of his most strenuous patriotism, and most dazzling popularity. Despairing of success by any efforts of the party in Parliament, he joined in the measure of secession adopted by the English whigs, but after a manner far more reconcilable to a sense of public duty, as well as far more effective in itself, than the absurd and inconsistent course which they pursued, of retaining the office of representatives, while they refused to peform any of its duties, except the enjoyment of its personal privileges. Mr. Grattan and the leaders of the Irish opposition vacated their seats at once, and left their constituents to choose other delegates. When the Union was propounded they again returned to their posts, and offered a resistance to that measure which at first proved successful, and deferred for a year the accomplishment of a measure planned in true wisdom, though executed by most corrupt and corrupting means—a measure as necessary for the well being of Ireland as for the security of the empire at large. He entered the Imperial Parliament in 1805, and continued with the exception of the question upon the renewal of the war in 1816, a constant and most powerful coadjutor of the Whig party, refusing office when they came into power upon Mr. Pitt's death, but lending them a strenuous support upon all great questions, whether of English policy or of Irish, and showing himself most conspicuously above the mean and narrow spirit that would confine a statesman's exertions to the questions which interest one portion of the empire, or with which his own fame in former times may have been more peculiarly entwined.

Among the orators, as among the statesmen of his

age, Mr. Grattan occupies a place in the foremost rank; and it was the age of the Pitts, the Foxes, and the Sheridans. His eloquence was of a very high order, all but of the very highest, and it was eminently original. In the constant stream of a diction replete with epigram and point—a stream on which floated gracefully, because naturally, flowers of various hues,—was poured forth the closest reasoning, the most luminous statement, the most persuasive display of all the motives that could influence, and of all the details that could enlighten, his audience. Often a different strain was heard, and it was declamatory and vehement—or pity was to be moved, and its pathos was as touching as it was simple—or, above all, an adversary sunk in baseness, or covered with crimes, was to be punished or to be destroyed, and a storm of the most terrible invective raged, with all the blights of sarcasm, and the thunders of abuse. The critic, led away for the moment, and unable to do more than feel with the audience, could in those cases, even when he came to reflect and to judge, find often nothing to reprehend; seldom in any case more than the excess of epigram, which had yet become so natural to the orator, that his argument and his narrative, and even his sagacious unfolding of principles, seemed spontaneously to clothe themselves in the most pointed terseness, and most apt and felicitous antitheses. From the faults of his country's eloquence he was, generally speaking, free. Occasionally an over-fondness for vehement expression, an exaggeration of passion, or an offensive appeal to Heaven, might be noted; very rarely a loaded use of figures, and, more rarely still, of figures broken and mixed. But the perpetual striving after far-fetched quaintness; the disdaining to say any one thing in an easy and natural style; the contempt of that rule, as true in rhetoric as in conduct, that it is wise to do common things in the common way; the affectation of excessive feelings upon all things, without regard to their relative importance; the making any occasion, even the most fitted to rouse genuine and natural feeling, a mere opportunity of theatrical display—all these failings, by which so many oratorical reputations have been blighted

among a people famous for their almost universal oratorical genius, were looked for in vain when Mr. Grattan rose, whether in the senate of his native country, or in that to which he was transferred by the Union. And if he had some peculiarity of outward appearance, as a low and awkward person, in which he resembled the first of orators, and even of manner, in which he had not like him made the defects of nature yield to severe culture; so had he once excellence of the very highest order, in which he may be truly said to have left all the orators of modern times behind—the severe abstinence which rests satisfied with striking the decisive blow in a word or two, not weakening its effect by repetition and expansion,—and another excellence, higher still, in which no orator of any age is his equal, the easy and copious flow of most profound, sagacious, and original principles, enunciated in terse and striking, but appropriate language. To give a sample of this latter peculiarity would be less easy, and would occupy more space; but of the former it may be truly said that Dante himself never conjured up a striking, a pathetic, and an appropriate image in fewer words than Mr. Grattan employed to describe his relation towards Irish independence, when, alluding to its rise in 1782, and its fall twenty years later, he said, "I sat by its cradle—I followed its hearse."

In private life he was without a stain, whether of temper or of principle: singularly amiable, as well as of unblemished purity in all the relations of family and of society; of manners as full of generosity as they were free from affectation; of conversation as much seasoned with spirit and impregnated with knowledge as it was void of all asperity and gall. Who ever heard him in private society, and marked the calm tone of his judicious counsel, the profound wisdom of his sagacious observations, the unceasing felicity of his expressions, the constant variety and brilliancy of his illustrations, could well suppose that he had conversed with the orator whose wit and whose wisdom enlightened and guided the senate of his country; but in the playful hilarity of the companion, his unbroken serenity, his unruffled good

nature, it would indeed have been a difficult thing to recognise the giant of debate, whose awful energies had been hurled, nor yet exhausted, upon the Corrys, the Duignans, and the Floods.*

The signal failure of the latter, when transplanted to the English Parliament, suggests a reference to the same passage in the life of Mr. Grattan. Men were variously inclined to conjecture upon his probable success; and the singularity of his external appearance, and his manner of speaking, as well as his action, so unusual in the English Parliament, made the event doubtful, for some time, during his speech of 1805. Nor were there wanting those surrounding Mr. Pitt, who foretold "that it would not do." That great debater, and experienced judge, is said to have for some moments partaken of these doubts, when the happy execution of some passage, not perhaps marked by the audience, at large, at once dispelled them; and he pronounced to his neighbours an authoritative and decisive sentence, which the unanimous voice of the House and of the country forthwith affirmed.

This illustrious patriot died a few days after his arrival in London, at the beginning of June, 1820, having come with the greatest difficulty, and in a dying state, to attend his parliamentary duties. A request was made to his family, that his remains might be buried in Westminster Abbey, instead of being conveyed for interment to Ireland; and this having been complied with, the obsequies were attended by all the more distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament. The following Letter containing the request was signed by the leaders

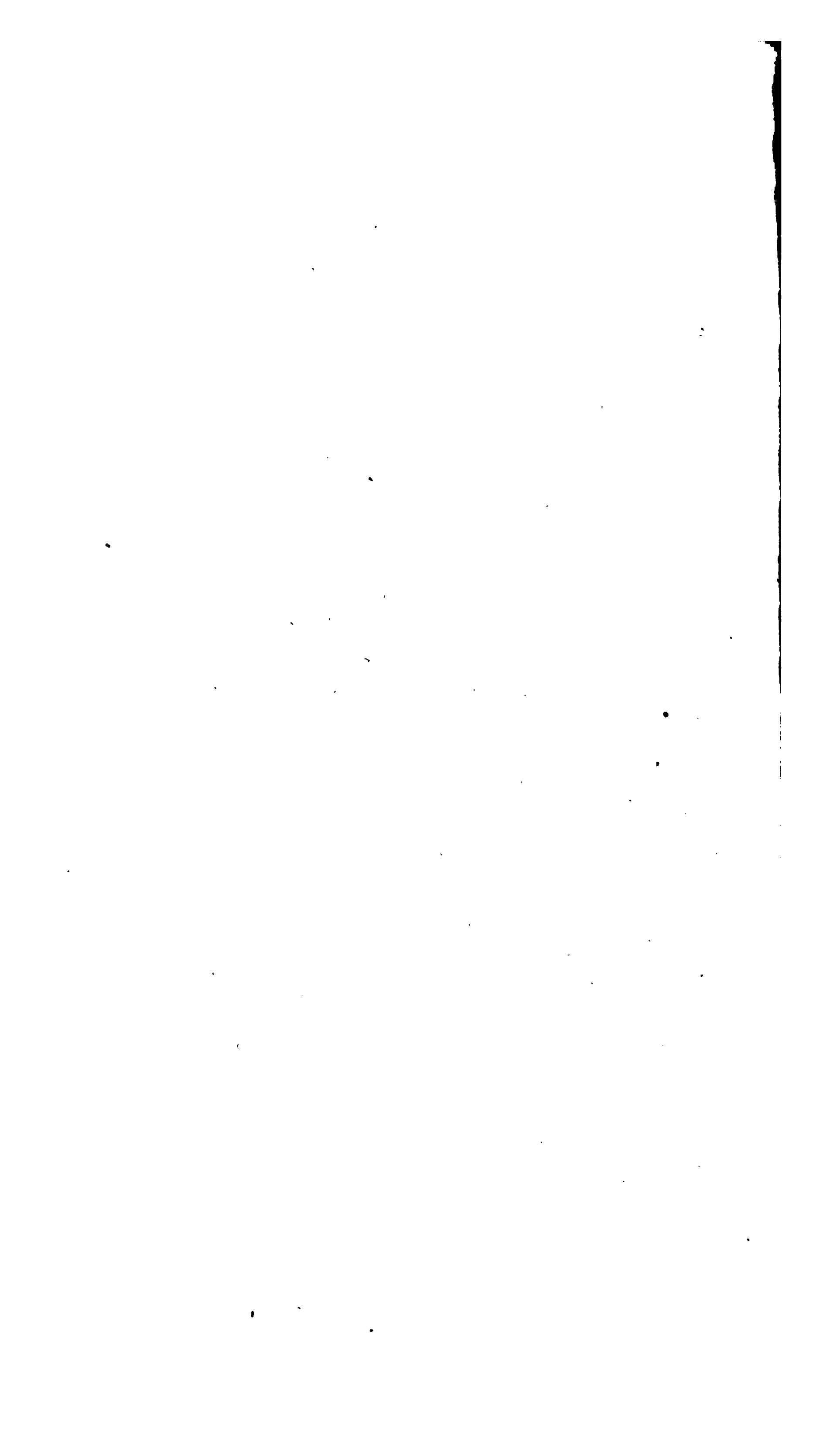
* It is always a matter of difficulty to draw the character of a person who belongs to another, and, in some particulars, a very different country. This has been felt in making the attempt to give a sketch of Mr. Grattan; and whoever has read the most lively and picturesque piece of biography that was ever given to the world, Mr. C. Phillips's Recollections of Curran, will join in the regret here expressed, that the present work did not fall into hands so able to perform it in a masterly manner. The constant occupation consequent upon great professional eminence, has unfortunately whitdrawn him from the walks of literature, in which he was so remarkably fitted to shine.

of the liberal party. The beauty of its chaste composition, was much, and justly, admired at the time; but little wonder was excited by it, when the author came to be known. It proceeded from the pen of one of the greatest poets whom this country has produced, as well as one of its finest prose writers; who, to this unstable fame, adds the more imperishable renown of being also one of the most honourable men, and most uncompromising friends of civil and religious liberty, who have appeared in any age. The rare felicity of our time, in possessing two individuals to whom this description might be applied,—Rogers and Campbell,—alone, makes it necessary to add, that the former is here meant:

"TO THE SONS OF MR. GRATTAN.

"Filled with veneration for the character of your father, we venture to express a wish, common to us with many of those who most admired and loved him, that what remains of him should be allowed to continue among us.

"It has pleased Divine Providence to deprive the empire of his services, while he was here in the neighbourhood of that sacred edifice where great men from all parts of the British dominions have been for ages interred. We are desirous of an opportunity of joining in the due honour to tried virtue and genius. Mr. Grattan belongs to us also, and great would be our consolation were we permitted to follow him to the grave, and to place him where he would not have been unwilling to lie—by the side of his illustrious fellow-labourers in the cause of freedom."



MR. WILBERFORCE.

Contemporary with Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt, whose intimate friend he was, and whose partisan for a time, appeared a man, in some respects more illustrious than either—one who, among the greatest benefactors of the human race, holds an exalted station—one whose genius was elevated by his virtues, and exalted by his piety. It is, unfortunately, hardly necessary to name one whom the vices and the follies of the age have already particularized, by making it impossible that what has been said could apply to any but Mr. Wilberforce.

Few persons have ever either reached a higher and more enviable place in the esteem of their fellow-creatures, or have better deserved the place they had gained, than William Wilberforce. He was naturally a person of great quickness and even subtilty of mind, with a lively imagination, approaching to playfulness of fancy; and hence he had wit in an unmeasured abundance, and in all its varieties; for he was endowed with an exquisite sense of the ludicrous in character, the foundation of humour, as well as with the perception of remote resemblances, the essence of wit. These qualities, however, he had so far disciplined his faculties as to keep in habitual restraint, lest he should ever offend against strict decorum, by introducing light matter into serious discussion, or be betrayed into personal remarks too poignant for the feelings of individuals. For his nature was mild and amiable beyond that of most men; fearful of giving the least pain in any quarter, even while heated with the zeal of controversy on questions that roused all his passions; and more anxious, if it were possible, to gain over rather than to overpower an adversary and disarm him by kindness, or the force of reason, or awakening appeals to his feelings, rather than defeat him by hostile attack.

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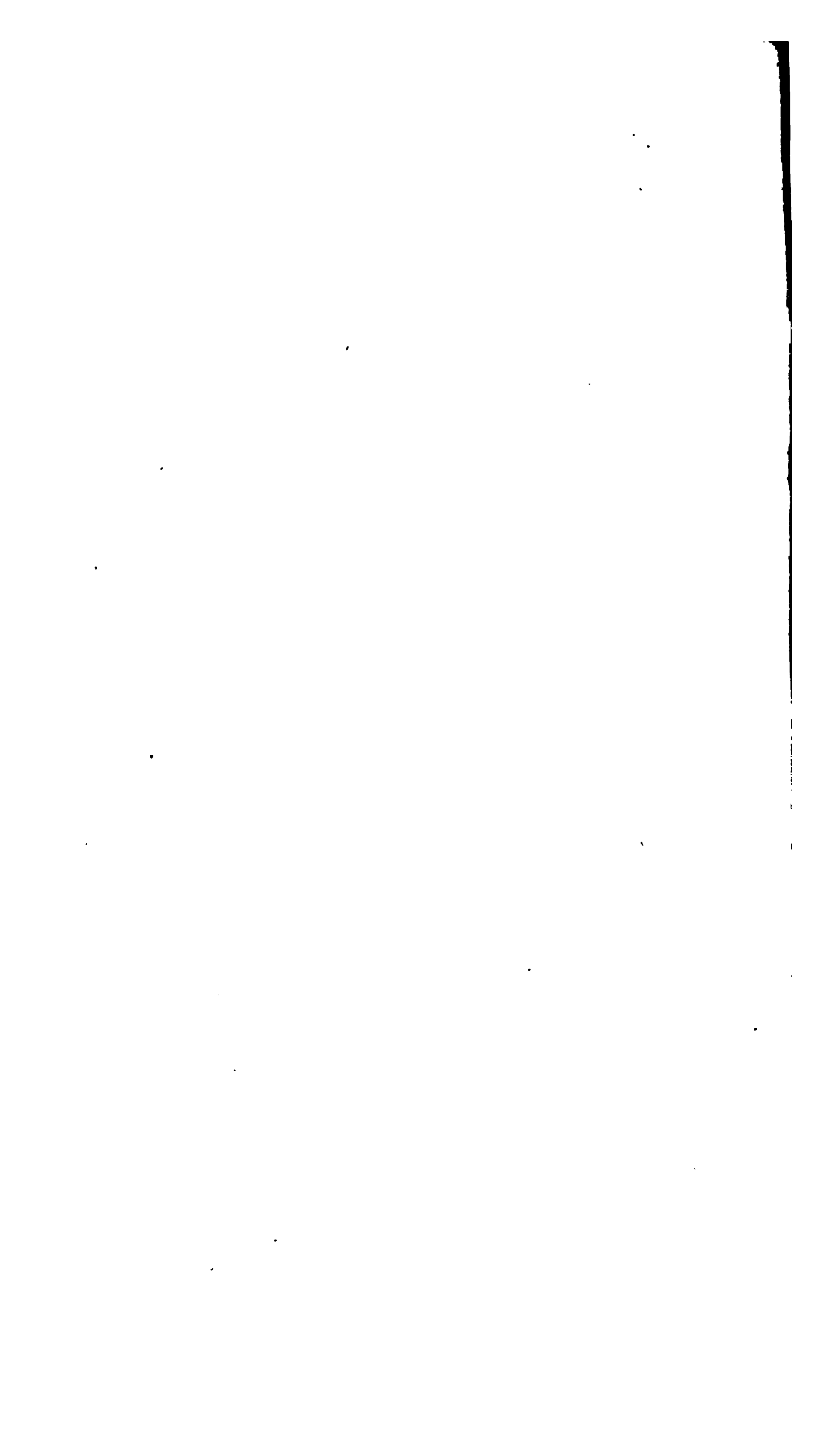


MR. CANNING.

When Mr. Pitt stood against the united powers of the Coalition by the support of the country and the people, in debate he had only Mr. Dundas, and occasionally Mr. Wilberforce, to whom he could look for assistance while attacked by Fox, Burke, North, Sheridan, Erskine, Windham. But a younger race afterwards grew up and came to his assistance; and of these Mr. Canning was undoubtedly the first. He was, in all respects, one of the most remarkable persons who lived in our times. Born with talents of the highest order, these had been cultivated with an assiduity and success which placed him in the first rank among the most accomplished scholars of his day; and he was only inferior to others in the walks of science, from the accident of the studies which Oxford cherished in his time being pointed almost exclusively to classical pursuits. But he was anything rather than a mere scholar. In him were combined, with a rich profusion, the most lively original fancy—a happily retentive and ready memory—singular powers of lucid statement—and occasionally wit in all its varieties, now biting and sarcastic to overwhelm an antagonist—now pungent or giving point to an argument—now playful for mere amusement, and bringing relief to a tedious statement, or lending a charm to dry chains of close reasoning—Erant ea in Philippo quæ, qui sine comparatione illorum spectaret, satis magna dixerit; summa libertas in oratione, multæ facetiæ satis creber in reprehendendis, solutus in explicandis sententiis; erat etiam imprimis, ut temporibus illis, Græcis doctrinis institutus, in altercando cum aliquo acculeo et maledicto facetus.—(Cic., *Brutus.*) Superficial observers, dazzled by this brilliancy, and by its sometimes being over-indulged, committed their accustomed mistake, and supposed that he who could thus adorn his subject

was an amusing speaker only, while he was helping on the argument at every step,—often making skilful statements perform the office of reasoning, and oftener still seeming to be witty when he was merely exposing the weakness of hostile positions, and thus taking them by the artillery of his wit. But in truth his powers of ordinary reasoning were of a very high order, and could not be excelled by the most practised master of dialectics. It was rather in the deep and full measure of impassioned declamation in its legitimate combination with rapid argument, the highest reach of oratory, that he failed: and this he rarely attempted. Of his powers of argumentation, his capacity for the pursuits of abstract science, his genius for adorning the least attractive subjects, there remains an imperishable record in his celebrated speeches upon the "Currency," of all his efforts the most brilliant and the most happy.

This great man was the slave of no mean or paltry passions, but a lofty ambition inspired him; and had he not too early become trained to official habits, he would have avoided the distinguished error of his life, an impression which clung to him from the desk, that no one can usefully serve his country, or effectually further his principles, unless he possess the power which place alone bestows. The traces of this belief are to be seen in many of the most remarkable passages of his life; and it even appears in the song with which he celebrated the praise of his illustrious leader and friend; for he treats as a fall his sacrificing power to principle, at a time when, by retiring from office, Mr. Pitt had earned the applause of millions. Mr. Canning himself gave an example yet more signal of abandoning office rather than tarnish his fame; and no act of his life can be cited which sheds a greater lustre on his memory.

In private society he was singularly amiable and attractive, though, except for a very few years of his early youth, he rarely frequented the circles of society, confining his intercourse to an extremely small number of warmly attached friends.* In all the relations of

* It is necessary to state this undoubted fact, that the folly of those may be rebuked, who have chosen to represent him as "a

domestic life he was blameless, and was the delight of his family, as in them he placed his own.* His temper, though naturally irritable and uneasy, had nothing petty or spiteful in it; and as no one better knew how and when to resent an injury, so none could more readily or more gracefully forgive.

It is supposed that, from his early acquaintance with Mr. Sheridan and one or two other Whigs, he originally had a leaning towards that side of the question. But he entered into public life at a very early age, under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, to whom he continued steadily attached till his death; accompanying him when he retired from power, and again quitting office upon his decease. His principles were throughout those of a liberal Tory, above the prejudices of the bigots who have rendered Toryism ridiculous, and free from the corruption that has made it hateful. Imbued with a warm attachment to the ancient institutions of the country, somewhat apt to overrate the merits of mere antiquity, from his classical habits, and from his early association, he nevertheless partook largely in the improved spirit of the age, and adopted all reforms, except such as he conscientiously believed were only dictated by a restless love of change, and could do no good, or such as went too far, and threatened revolution. But this was the posture into which his opinions and principles may be said ultimately to have subsided—these the bearings of his mind towards the great objects of political controversy in the station which it finally took when the tempest of French convulsion had ceased, and statesmen

great diner-out." It may be safely affirmed that none of those historians of the day ever once saw him at table.

* It is well known how much more attachment was conceived for his memory by his family and his devoted personal friends, than by his most stanch political adherents. The friendships of statesmen are proverbially of rotten texture; but it is doubtful if ever this rottenness was displayed in a more disgusting manner than when the puny men of whose nostrils he had been the breath, joined his worst enemies as soon as they had laid him in the grave. It was said by one hardly ever related to him but in open hostility, that "the gallantry of his kindred had rescued his memory from the offices of his friends,"—in allusion to Lord Clanricarde's most powerful and touching appeal on that disgraceful occasion.

were moored in still water. He began his career in the most troublous period of the storm; and it happened to him, as to all men, that the tone of his sentiments upon state affairs was very much influenced through after times by the events which first awakened his ambition, or directed his earliest pursuit of glory. The atrocities of the French Jacobins—the thoughtless violence of the extreme democratic party in this country, reduced by those atrocities to a small body—the spirit of aggression which the conduct of her neighbours had first roused in France, and which unexampled victories soon raised to a pitch that endangered all national independence—led Mr. Canning with many others who naturally were friendly to liberty, into a course of hostility towards all change, because they became accustomed to confound reform with revolution, and to dread nothing so much as the mischiefs which popular violence had produced in France, and with which the march of French conquests threatened to desolate Europe. Thus it came to pass that the most vigorous and the most active portion of his life was passed in opposing all reforms; in patronising the measures of coercion into which Mr. Pitt had so unhappily for his fame and for his country, been seduced by the alarms of weak, and the selfish schemes of unprincipled men; and in resisting the attempts which the friends of peace persevered to make for terminating hostilities, so long the curse, and still by their fruits the bane of this empire.

It was not till the end of the war that his natural good sense had its free scope, and he became aware of the difference between Reform, of which he admitted the necessity, and Revolution, against all risk of which he anxiously guarded. He had early joined Mr. Pitt, on the Catholic question, and, while yet the war raged, he had rendered incalculable service to the cause of Emancipation, by devoting to it some of his most brilliant displays in the House of Commons. This, with the accident of a contested election in a great town, bringing him more in contact with popular feelings and opinions, contributed to the liberal course of policy on almost all subjects, which he afterwards pursued. Upon

one only question he continued firm and unbending; he was the most uncompromising adversary of all Parliamentary Reform,—resisting even the least change in the representative system, and holding that alteration once begun was fatal to its integrity.* This opposition to reform, became the main characteristic of the Canning party, and it regulated their conduct on almost all questions. Before 1831, no exception can be perceived in their hostility to reform, unless their differing with the Duke of Wellington on East Retford, can be regarded as such; but, in truth, their avowed reason for supporting that most insignificant measure was, that the danger of a real and effectual reform might thereby be warded off. The friends of Mr. Canning, including Lords Palmerston and Glenelg, who, in 1818, had been joined by Lord Melbourne,† continued steady to the same principles, until happily, on the formation of Lord Grey's government, they entirely changed their course, and became the advocates, with their reforming colleagues, of a change compared to which the greatest reforms ever contemplated by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, or denounced by Mr. Burke and Mr. Canning, hardly deserve to be classed among measures of innovation. No one can pronounce with perfect confidence on the conduct which any statesman would have pursued, had he survived the times in which he flourished. But if such an opinion may ever with safety be formed, it seems to be in the present case; and it would require far more boldness to surmise that Mr. Canning, or even Mr. Huskisson, would have continued in the

* During the short period of his brilliant administration, the question of disfranchising a burgh, convicted of gross corruption, gave rise to the only difference between him and Mr. Brougham, who was understood to have mainly contributed towards that junction of the Whigs and liberal Tories which dissolved and scattered the old and high Tory party; and a division took place in which Mr. Canning was defeated.

† Lord Melbourne differed from the rest of the Canning party on this point. He always opposed Reform, but held that if any was to be granted, it must be in an ample measure; and he did not vote with them, but with the Government, on the Reform question, although he resigned with them upon that occasion.

government after the first of March, 1831, than to affirm that nothing could ever have induced such an alteration in their most fixed opinions upon so momentous a question.

But while such was the strength of his opinions,—prejudices as they seem,—on one great subject, on almost all other matters, whether of foreign or domestic policy, his views were liberal and suited to the spirit of the age, while he was a firm supporter of the established constitution of the country. If ever man was made for the service and the salvation of a party, Mr. Canning seemed to have been raised up for that of the Tories: if ever party committed a fatal error, it was their suffering groundless distrust, and unintelligible dislike to estrange him from their side. At a time when nothing but his powerful arm could recall unity to their camp, and save them from impending destruction, they not merely wilfully kindled the wrath of Achilles, but resolved that he should no longer fight on their side, and determined to throw away their last chance of winning the battle. To him they by general assent preferred Lord Castlereagh as their leader, without a single shining quality except the carriage and the manners of high birth: while Mr. Canning, but for his accidental death, would have ended his life as governor of a country where men neither debate, nor write; where eloquence evaporates in scores of paragraphs, and the sparkling of wit and the cadence of rhyme are alike unknown.

The defects of Mr. Canning's character or of his genius were not many, nor those difficult to discover. His irritable temper has been noted; he had a love of trifling and a fondness for indulging in pleasantry, more injurious to his estimation with ordinary men than his temper. Nothing could be more natural than that one who so much excelled others in these lighter, more brilliant, but hardly attainable qualities, should be prone to exercise them over-much; but they greatly marred the effect of his more solid and important talents. Above all they enlarged the circle of his enemies, and occasionally transferred to it the friends whom they lost him. With the common run of ordinary mortals, who compose

the mass of every country—with the plainer sort of men who form the bulk of every audience, and who especially bear sway in their own appointed place, the assembly that represents the English people,—it would have been contrary to nature if one so lively, so fond of his joke, so careless whom his merriment might offend, so ready to turn the general laugh against any victim,—had been popular, nay, had failed to prove the object of suspicion, and even dislike. The duller portion, over whose heads his lighter missiles flew, were offended with one who spoke so lightly; it was almost personal to them if he jested, and a classical allusion was next thing to an affront. "He will be laughing at the quorum or talking metaphysics next," said the squire, representing a county. But even they who emulated him and favoured his claims, did not much like the man who had made them so merry, for they felt what it was that they laughed at, and it might be their own turn to-morrow.

That his oratory suffered materially from this self-indulgent habit, so hard to resist by him who possesses the faculty of amusing his audience, and can scarcely pause at the moment that he is exerting it successfully, it would be incorrect to affirm. The graver parts of his discourse were perfectly sustained; they were unmixed with ribaldry; they were quite as powerful in themselves as if they had not stood out from the inferior matter and had not soared above it. There is no doubt, however, that with an unreflecting audience, their effect was somewhat confused by the cross lights which the wit, sometimes bordering upon drollery, shot over the canvass. But his declamation, though often powerful, always beautifully ornate, never deficient in admirable diction, was certainly not of the very highest class. It wanted depth: it came from the mouth, not from the heart; and it tickled or even filled the ear rather than penetrated the bosom of the listener. The orator never seemed to forget himself and be absorbed in his theme: he was not carried away by his passions, and he carried not his audience along with him. An actor stood before us, a first-rate one no doubt; but still an actor; and we never forget that it was a representation we were witnessing,

not a real scene. The Grecian artist was of the second class only, at whose fruit the *birds* pecked; while, on seeing Parrhasius's picture, *men* cried out to draw aside the curtain. Mr. Canning's exclamation entertained his hearers, so artistly was it executed; but only an inexperienced critic could mistake it for the highest reach of the rhetorical art. The truly great orator is he who carries away his hearer, or fixes his whole attention on the subject—with the subject fills his whole soul—than the subject, will suffer him to think of no other thing—of the subject's existence alone will let him be conscious, while the vehement inspiration lasts on his own mind which he communicates to his hearer—and will only suffer him to reflect on the admirable execution of what he has heard after the burst is over, the whirlwind has passed away, and the excited feelings have in the succeeding lull sunk into repose.

The vice of this statesman's public principle was much more pernicious in its influence upon his public conduct, than the defects which we have just remarked were upon his oratory. Bred up in office from his early years, he had become so much accustomed to its pleasures that he felt uneasy when they were taken from him. It was in him nothing like a sordid propensity that produced this frame of mind. For emolument, he felt the most entire indifference; upon the management of petty intrigue which is called jobbing, he looked down with sovereign contempt. But his extraordinarily active mind, impatient of rest, was only to be allayed by occupation, and office afforded this at all hours, and in boundless measure. His kind and friendly nature, attaching him strongly to his associates, as it strongly fixed their affections upon him, made him feel uneasy at their exclusion from power, and desirous to possess the means of gratifying them. Above all, though a great debater, and breathing the air of Parliament as the natural element of his being, he yet was a man of action too, and would sway the counsels as well as shake the senates of his country. He loved debate for its exercise of his great faculties; he loved power for its own sake, caring far less for display than for gratifi-

cation. Hence, when he retired from office upon the dispute which Lord Castlereagh, (a passage of his life much and unjustly blamed at the time, but which had it been ever so exactly as most men then viewed it, has in later times been cast into the thickest shades of oblivion by acts infinitely more abominable and disgraceful,) and when he found that instead of a speedy return to power he was condemned to years of exclusion, his impatience led him to the imprudent step of serving under his successful rival on a foreign mission of an unimportant cast. The uneasiness which he manifestly suffered in retirement, even made him consent to the scheme of more permanent expatriation,* which only the unhappy death of Lord Castlereagh prevented from taking effect. But these were rather matters affecting the person than perverting the principles, or misguiding the conduct of the party. The unfortunate love of power, carried too far, and felt so as to make the gratification of it essential to existence, is ruinous to the character of a statesman. It leads often to abandonment of principle, constantly to compromise; it subjects him to frequent dependence; it lowers the tone of his mind, and teaches his spirit to feed on the better bread of others' bounty; above all, it occasionally severs him from his natural friends, and brings him acquainted with strange and low associates, whose natures, as their habits, are fit to be scorned by him, and who have with him but one thing in common, that they seek the same object with himself—they for love of gain, he for lust of dominion.

Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
Piu caramente, é questo, é quello strale
Che l' arco d' esilio pria saetta,
Tu proverai come si sa di sale
Lo pane d' altrui, é come é duro calle
Lo scendere é il salir altrui scale
E che il piu ti gravera le spalle
Sara la compagnia malvagia é scempia
Che tu vedrai in questa valle!†

Men are apt to devise ingenious excuses for those failings which they cherish most fondly, and if they

* As Governor-General of India. † Dante, Par.

cannot close their eyes to them, had rather defend than correct. Mr. Canning reasoned himself into a belief which he was wont to profess, that no man can serve his country with effect out of office; as if there were no public in this country; as if there were no Parliament; no forum; no press; as if the Government were in the hands of a Vizier to whom the Turk had given his signet-ring, or a favourite to whom the Czarina had tossed her handkerchief; as if the patriot's vocation had ceased and the voice of public virtue were heard no more; as if the people were without power over their rulers, and only existed to be taxed and to obey! A more pernicious notion never entered the mind of a public man, nor one more fitted to undermine his public virtue. It may be made the cloak for every species of flagitious and sordid calculation; and what in him was only a sophistical self-deception, or a mere illusion of dangerous self-love, might have been, by the common herd of trading politicians, used as the cover for every low, and despicable, and unprincipled artifice. No errors are so dangerous as those false theories of morals which conceal the bounds between right and wrong; enable Vice to trick herself out in the attire of Virtue; and hide our frailties from ourselves by throwing around them the garb of profound wisdom.

Of Mr. Canning it may be justly observed, as of Mr. Fox, that whatever errors he committed on other questions, on the Abolition of the Slave Trade he was undeviatingly true to sound principles and enlightened policy. Respecting the questions connected with Emancipation his course was by no means so commendable; but of the Abolitionists he was at once a strenuous and effective ally. It is understood that he deeply lamented the contrast which Mr. Pitt's proceedings on this question presented to his speeches; and he insisted on bringing forward a motion against the policy of capturing colonies to extend the slave-traffic, when Mr. Pitt was in retirement.

SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY.

How different from Mr. Pitt's conduct was that of Lord Grenville, who no sooner acceded to office in 1806, than he encouraged all the measures which first restrained, and then entirely abolished that infernal traffic! The crown lawyers of his administration were directed to bring in a bill for abolishing the foreign slave-trade of our colonies, as well as all importation into the conquered settlements—and when it is recollected that Sir Samuel Romilly at that time added lustre and gave elevation to the office of solicitor-general, it may well be supposed that those duties were cheerfully and duly followed both by him and by his honest, learned, and experienced colleague, Sir Arthur Pigott. It is fit that no occasion on which Sir Samuel Romilly is named should ever be passed over without an attempt to record the virtues and endowments of so great and so good a man, for the instruction of after ages.

Few persons have ever attained celebrity of name and exalted station, in any country, or in any age, with such unsullied purity of character, as this equally eminent and excellent person. His virtue was stern and inflexible, adjusted, indeed, rather to the rigorous standard of ancient morality than to the less ambitious and less elevated maxims of the modern code. But in this he very widely differed from the antique model upon which his character generally appeared to be framed, and so very far surpassed it, that there was nothing either affected or repulsive about him; and if ever a man existed who would more than any other have scorned the pitiful fopperies which disfigured the worth of Cato, or have shrunk from the harsher virtue of Brutus, Romilly was that man. He was, in truth, a person of the most natural and simple manners, and one in whom the kindliest charities and warmest feelings of human nature were blended in the largest measures

with that firmness of purpose and unrelaxed sincerity of principle, in almost all other men found to be little compatible with the attributes of a gentle nature and the feelings of a tender heart.

The observer who gazes upon the character of this great man is naturally struck first of all with its most prominent feature, and that is the rare excellence which we have now marked, so far above every gift of the understanding, and which throws the lustre of mere genius into the shade. But his capacity was of the highest order. An extraordinary reach of thought; great powers of attention and of close reasoning; a memory quick and retentive; a fancy eminently brilliant, but kept in perfect discipline by his judgment and his taste, which was nice, cultivated, and severe, without any of the squeamishness so fatal to vigour—these were the qualities which, under the guidance of the most persevering industry, and with the stimulus of a lofty ambition, rendered him unquestionably the first advocate, and the most profound lawyer, of the age he flourished in; placed him high among the ornaments of the Senate; and would, in all likelihood, have given him the foremost place among them all, had not the occupations of his laborious profession necessarily engrossed a disproportionate share of his attention, and made political pursuits fill a subordinate place in the scheme of his life. *Jurisperitorum disertissimus, disertorum vero jurisperitissimus.* As his practice, so his authority at the bar and with the bench was unexampled; and his success in Parliament was great and progressive. Some of his speeches, both forensic and parliamentary, are nearly unrivalled in excellence. The reply, even as reported in 11 *Vesey, junior*, in the cause of *Hugonin* v. *Beasley*,* where legal matters chiefly were in question, may give no mean idea of his extraordinary powers. The last speech that he pronounced in the House of Commons, upon a bill respecting the law of na-

* A case very nearly resembling this, *Macabe* v. *Hussey*, was argued in the House of Lords, in October, 1831, by Mr. O'Connell, and his argument was a master-piece, according to the judgment of those who heard it.

turalization, which gave him occasion to paint the misconduct of the expiring Parliament in severe and even dark colours, was generally regarded as unexampled among the efforts of his eloquence; nor can they, who recollect its effects, ever cease to lament with tenfold bitterness of sorrow, the catastrophe which terminated his life, and extinguished his glory, when they reflect that the vast accession to his influence from being chosen for Westminster, came at a time when his genius had reached its amplest display, and his authority in Parliament, unaided by station, had attained the highest eminence. The friend of public virtue, and the advocate of human improvement, will mourn still more sorrowfully over his urn than the admirers of genius, or those who are dazzled by political triumphs. For no one could know Romilly, and doubt that, as he only valued his own success and his own powers, in the belief that they might conduce to the good of mankind, so each augmentation of his authority, each step of his progress, must have been attended with some triumph in the cause of humanity and justice. True, he would at length, in the course of nature, have ceased to live; but then the bigot would have ceased to persecute—the despot to vex—the desolate poor to suffer—the slave to groan and tremble—the ignorant to commit crimes—and the ill-contrived law to engender criminality.

On these things all men are agreed; but if a more distinct account be desired of his eloquence, it must be said that it united all the more severe graces of oratory, both as regards the manner and the substance. No man argued more closely when the understanding was to be addressed; no man declaimed more powerfully when indignation was to be aroused or the feelings moved. His language was choice and pure; his powers of invective resembled rather the grave authority with which the judge puts down a contempt, or punishes an offender, than the attack of an advocate against his adversary and his equal. His imagination was the minister whose services were rarely required, and whose mastery was never for an instant admitted. His sarcasm was tremendous, nor always very sparingly em-

ployed. His manner was perfect, in voice, in figure, in a countenance of singular beauty and dignity ; nor was anything in his oratory more striking or more effective than the heartfelt sincerity which it throughout displayed, in topic, in diction, in tone, in look, in gesture. "In Scauri oratione sapientis hominis et recti, gravitas summa, et naturalis quædam inerat auctoritas, non ut causam, sed ut testimonium dicere putares. Significabat enim non prudentiam solum, sed, quod maxime rem continebat, fidem."*

Considering his exalted station at the bar, his pure and unsullied character, and the large space which he filled in the eye of the country, men naturally looked for his ascent to the highest station in the profession of which he was, during so many years, the ornament and the pride. Nor could any one question that he would have presented to the world the figure of a consummate judge. He alone felt any doubt upon the extent of his own judicial qualities; and he has recorded in his journal (that invaluable document in which he was wont to set down freely his sentiments on men and things) a modest opinion, expressing his apprehension, should he ever be so tried, that men would say of him "*Capax imperii nisi imperasset.*" With this single exception, offering so rare an instance of impartial self-judgment, and tending of itself to its own refutation, all who had no interest in the elevation of others, have held his exclusion from the supreme place in the law, as one of the heaviest items in the price paid for the factious structure of our practical government.

In his private life and personal habits he exhibited a model for imitation, and an object of unqualified esteem. All his severity was reserved for the forum and the senate, when vice was to be lashed, or justice vindicated, the public delinquent exposed, or the national oppressor overawed. In his family and in society, where it was his delight, and the only reward of his unremitting labours, to unbend, he was amiable, simple, natural, cheerful. The vast resources of his memory,—the astonish-

* Cic., *Brutus.*

ing economy of time, by which he was enabled to read almost every work of interest that came from the press of either his hereditary or his native country, either France or England,—the perfect correctness of his taste, refined to such a pitch, that his pencil was one of no ordinary power, and his verses, when once or twice only he wrote poetry, were of great merit,—his freedom from affectation,—the wisdom of not being above doing ordinary things in the ordinary way,—all conspired to render his society peculiarly attractive, and would have made it courted, even had his eminence in higher matters been far less conspicuous. While it was the saying of one political adversary, the most experienced and correct observer* among all the parliamentary men of his time, that he never was out of his place while Romilly spoke without finding that he had cause to lament his absence,—it was the confession of all who were admitted to his private society, that they forgot the lawyer, the orator, and the patriot, and had never been aware, while gazing on him with admiration, how much more he really deserved that tribute than he appeared to do when seen from afar.

If defects are required to be thrown into such a sketch, and are deemed as necessary as the shades in a picture, or, at least, as the more subdued tones of some parts for giving relief to others, this portraiture of Romilly must be content to remain imperfect. For what is there on which to dwell with blame, if it be not a proneness to prejudice in favour of opinions resembling his own, a blindness to the defects of those who held them, and a prepossession against those who held them not? While there is so very little to censure, there is unhappily much to deplore. A morbid sensibility embittered many hours of his earlier life, and when deprived of the wife whom he most tenderly and justly loved, contributed to bring on an inflammatory fever, in the paroxysm of which he untimely met his end.

The Letter of Mr. Brougham, on Abuse of Charities, was communicated in manuscript to him while attend-

* Mr. Charles Long, afterwards Lord Farnborough.

ing the sick-bed of that excellent person, whose loss brought on his own. It tended to beguile some of those sorrowful hours, the subject having long deeply engaged his attention; and it was the last thing that he read. His estimate of its merits was exceedingly low; at least he said he was sure no tract had ever been published on a more dry subject, or was likely to excite less attention. The interest of the subject, however, was much undervalued by him; for the letter ran through eight editions in the month of October.*

That the highly approved of the labours of the Education Committee, however, and that the conduct of its Chairman shared fully in his approval, there can be no doubt. In the last will which he made, there is a warm expression of personal regard and a strong testimony to public merits, accompanying a desire that his friend would join with another whom we had long known intimately, and whom he consequently most highly and most justly esteemed, Mr. Whishaw, in performing the office of literary executor. The manuscripts which he left were numerous and important. The most interesting are the beautiful Sketches of his early life, and the Journal to which reference has been already made. But his commentaries upon subjects connected with jurisprudence are those of the greatest value; for they show that most of the reforms of which he maintains the expediency, have since his decease been adopted by the Legislature; and they thus form a powerful reason for adopting those others which he recommends, and which are not now less favoured by the general opinion of mankind, than were the former class at the early period when he wrote. The injunction to his friends contained in his will, was truly characteristic of the man. He particularly desired them, in determining whether or not the manuscripts should be published, only to regard the prospect there was of their being in any degree service-

* The last book of any importance read by him was Mr. Hallam's first great work, of which he justly formed the highest opinion, and recommenced the immediate perusal of it to the author of the Letter, as a contrast to that performance, in respect of the universal interest of the subject.

able to mankind, and by no means to throw away a thought upon any injury which the appearance of such unfinished works might do to his literary character. Whoever knew him, indeed, was well persuaded that in all his exertions his personal gratification never was for a moment consulted, unless as far as whatever he did, or whatever he witnessed in others, had a relish for him exactly proportioned to its tendency towards the establishment of the principles which formed, as it were, a part of his nature, and towards the promotion of human happiness, the grand aim of all his views. This is that colleague and comrade whose irreparable loss his surviving friends have had to deplore through all their struggles for the good cause in which they had stood by his side; a loss which each succeeding day renders heavier, and harder to bear, when the misconduct of some, and the incapacity of others, so painfully recall the contrast of one whose premature end gave the first and the only pang that had ever come from him; and all his associates may justly exclaim in the words of Tully regarding Hortensius, "Augebat etiam molestiam, quod magnâ sapientium civium bonorumque penuriâ, vir egregius, conjunctissimusque mecum consiliorum omnium societate, alienissimo reipublicæ tempore extinctus, et auctoritatis, et prudentiæ suæ triste nobis desiderium reliquerat; dolebamque, quod non, ut plerique putabant, adversarium, aut obtrectatorem laudum mearum, sed socium potius et consortem gloriosi laboris amiseram."

And here for a moment let us pause. We have been gazing on the faint likenesses of many great men. We have been traversing a Gallery, on either side of which they stand ranged. We have made bold in that edifice to "expatiate and confer the State affairs" of their age. Cognizant of its history, aware of the principles by which the English chiefs are marshalled, sagacious of the springs that move the politic wheel whose revolutions we contemplate, it is an easy thing for us to comprehend

the phenomenon most remarkably presented by those figures and their arrangement; nor are we led to stare aghast at that which would astound any mind not previously furnished with the ready solution to make all plain and intelligible. But suppose some one from another hemisphere, or another world, admitted to the spectacle which we find so familiar, and consider what would be its first effect upon his mind.—"Here," he would say, "stand the choicest spirits of their age; the greatest wits, the noblest orators, the wisest politicians, the most illustrious patriots. Here they stand, whose hands have been raised for their country, whose magical eloquence has shook the spheres, whose genius has poured out strains worthy the inspiration of the gods, whose lives were devoted to the purity of their principles, whose memories were bequeathed to a race grateful for benefits received from their sufferings and their sacrifices. Here stand all these "lights of the world and demigods of fame;" but here they stand not ranged on one side of this Gallery, having served a common country! With the same bright object in their view, their efforts were divided, not united; they fiercely combated each other, and not together assailed some common foe; their great exertions were bestowed, their more than mortal forces were expended, not in furthering the general good, not in resisting their country's enemies, but in conflicts among themselves; and all their triumphs were won over each other, and all their sufferings were endured at each other's hands!"—"Is it," the unenlightened stranger would add, "a reality that I survey, or a troubled vision that mocks my sight? Am I indeed contemplating the prime of men amongst a rational people, or the Coryphei of a band of mimes? Or, haply, am I admitted to survey the cells of some hospital appointed for the insane; or is it, peradventure, the vaults of some pandemonium through which my eyes have been suffered to wander till my vision aches, and my brain is disturbed?"

Thus far the untutored native of some far-distant wild on earth, or the yet more ignorant inhabitant of some world remote, "beyond the solar walk or Milky Way."

We know more; we apprehend things better. But let us even in our pride of enlightened wisdom, pause for a moment to reflect on this most anomalous state of things,—this arrangement of political affairs which systematically excludes at least one-half of the great men of each age from their country's service, and devotes both classes infinitely more to maintaining a conflict with one another than to furthering the general good. And here it may be admitted at once that nothing can be less correct than their view who regard the administration of affairs as practically in the hands of only one-half the nation, whilst the excluded portion is solely occupied in thwarting their proceedings. The influence of both parties is exerted, and the movement of the state machine partakes of both the forces impressed upon it; neither taking the direction of the one nor the other, but a third line between both. This concession, no doubt, greatly lessens the evil; but it is very far indeed from removing it. Why must there always be this conclusion, and this conflict? Does not every one immediately perceive how it must prove detrimental to the public service in the great majority of instances; and how miserable a make-shift for something better and more rational it is, even where it does more good than harm? Besides, if it requires a constant and systematic opposition to prevent mischief, and keep the machine of state in the right path, of what use is our boasted representative government, which is designed to give the people the control over their rulers, and serves no other purposes at all? Let us for a moment consider the origin of this system of party, that we may the better be able to appreciate its value and to comprehend its manner of working.

The origin of party may be traced by fond theorists and sanguine votaries of the system, to a radical difference of the opinion and principle; to the "*idem sentire de republicâ*" which has at all times marshalled men in combination or split them in oppositions; but it is pretty plain to any person of ordinary understanding, that a far less romantic ground of union and of separation has for the most part existed—the individual interests of

the parties; the *idem velle atque idem nolle;* the desire of power and of plunder, which, as all cannot share, each is desirous of snatching and holding. The history of English party is as certainly that of a few great men and powerful families on the one hand, contending for place and power, with a few others on the opposite quarter, as it is the history of the Plantagenets, the Tudors, and the Stuarts. There is nothing more untrue than to represent principle as at the bottom of it; interest is at the bottom, and the opposition of principle is subservient to the opposition of interest. Accordingly, the result has been, that unless perhaps where a dynasty was changed, as in 1688, and for some time afterwards, and excepting on questions connected with this change, the very same conduct was held and the same principles professed by both parties when in office and by both when in opposition. Of this we have seen sufficiently remarkable instances in the course of the foregoing pages. The Whig in opposition was for retrenchment and for peace; transplant him into office, he cared little for either. Bills of coercion, suspensions of the constitution, were his abhorrence when propounded by Tories; in place, he propounded them himself. Acts of indemnity and of attainder were the favourities of the Tory in power; the Tory in opposition was the enemy of both. The gravest charge ever brought by the Whig against his adversary, was the personal proscription of an exalted individual to please a King; the worst charge that the Tory can level against the Whig, is the support of a proscription, still less justifiable, to please a Viceroy.

It cannot surely in these circumstances be deemed extraordinary that plain men, uninitiated in the Aristocratic mysteries whereof a rigid devotion to party forms one of the most sacred, should be apt to see a very different connexion between principle and faction from the one usually put forward; and that without at all denying a relation between the two things, they should reverse the account generally given by party men, and suspect them of taking up principles in order to marshal themselves in alliances and hostilities for their own in-

terests, instead of engaging in those contests because of their conflicting principles. In a word, there seems some reason to suppose that interest having really divided them into bands, principles are professed for the purpose of better compassing their objects by maintaining a character and gaining the support of the people.

That to a certain degree this is true, we think can hardly be doubted, although it is also impossible to deny that there is a plain line of distinction between the two great parties which formerly prevailed in this country upon one important point, the foundations and extent of the Royal prerogative. But that this line can now be traced it would be absurd to pretend. Mr. Pitt and even Lord North had no other opinions respecting kingly power than Mr. Fox or Burke; and the rival theories of Sir Robert Filmer and Mr. Locke were as absolute during the American war as they are at this day. Then have not men, since Jacobitism and Divine Right were exploded, generally adopted opinions upon the practical questions of the day in such a manner as to let them conveniently co-operate with certain acts of statesmen and oppose others; join some family interests together in order to counterbalance some other family interests; league themselves in bodies to keep or to get power in opposition to other bands formed with a similar view? This surely will not, upon a calm review of the facts, be denied by any whose judgment is worth having.

Observe how plainly the course pursued by one class dictates that to be taken by the other. There must be combinations, and there must be oppositions; and therefore things to differ upon, as well as things to agree upon, must needs be found. Thus, the King is as hostile as bigotry and tyranny can make him to American liberty, and his ministers support him in the war to crush it. This throws the opposition upon the liberal side of the question without which they can neither keep together nor continue to resist the ministry. Is any man so blind as seriously to believe that, had Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox been the Ministers of George III. they would have resigned rather than try to put down the Americans? If so, let him open his eyes, and ask himself another simple question. What Minister would ever volunteer his ad-

vice to dismember the empire? But if that fails to convince him, let him recollect that the American war had raged for years before the word "Separation" crossed the lips of any man in either House of Parliament—all the attacks were made upon the ill-treatment of our fellow-subjects, and the mismanagement of the war; the Whigs would have been more kind rulers, and better generals, but only in order to prevent the last of calamities—Separation and Independence. Nay, the same party being now in power, have avowed towards Canada the very principles upon which Lord North carried on the former contest. The Tories may perhaps allege that they have of late been more consistent.

Take another instance. While the Whigs were out of office the same King's bigotry refused to emancipate the Roman Catholics. It would be a strong thing to hold, that the party which was always distinguished for its hatred of Romanism, and which had founded its power of old on the penal laws, must of necessity have taken an opposite view of this question because circumstances had changed and those laws had become unnecessary, and because the King, supposing them to have been his servants, would have adhered to the ancient Whig tenets. But when, in opposition themselves, they found some millions ready to rally against the Court, and saw their adversaries the ministers of the day, siding with the King, they never hesitated a moment in taking their line, and fought gallantly till the battle was won. Without affirming that the altered view of the question was wholly caused by the position of Parties, and dictated by the Ministers taking the other line, we may at least assert, without any fear of contradiction, that the promptitude with which the change was made by the leaders is traceable to this source; and that their having power to make their less liberal and enlightened followers in the country join them, doing violence to their most rooted prejudices, can in no other way be accounted for than by referring to the operation of party tactics. Indeed, this operation alone can explain the phenomenon of the two great factions having changed sides on the whole question; the Tories taking the very part now

which the Whigs did in the days of the Somers, the Marlboroughs, the Godolphins, and somewhat earlier in the times of the Russells and the Sidneys. The solution of the enigma is to be found chiefly in the accidental circumstance of the parties having at the two different periods been in opposite positions—the Whigs in power at one time, the Tories at the other, and the Crown holding the same course in each case. The only other circumstance that exists to modify this conclusion, is, that the principles of the Whig families at the Revolution led to their being in power; although it would be a bold thing to assert that, if the Tory families had been preferred, through some accident of personal favour, by William and Anne, the Whig families then in opposition would have supported the penal code; or even that, if George I. had turned his back upon them, and courted their adversaries, they would have kept quite clear of Jacobite connexions, which some of the most distinguished, as it was, are well known to have formed.

Nor is there much reason to suppose that had the parties changed positions in 1792 the Whigs would, as a matter of course, have been against the war. Half the party were found to be the most strenuous advocates of a rupture with France, and their accession to office as a body followed this avowal. The whole could not pursue the same course; and Mr. Pitt having unhappily declared for war, the opposition was for peace. If any one feels very confident that the great men whom we have been contemplating in their glorious resistance to that ruinous contest, would have maintained peace at all hazards, including a quarrel with the Aristocracy and the Court, had they been George III.'s Ministers, we beseech him to consider how little disposed they showed themselves, after Mr. Pitt's death, to make sacrifices for the great object of pacification, and how forward they were in gratifying the King's prejudices on Hanover, which their new leader declared was as much a British interest as Hampshire. One thing is certain enough,—had the Whigs joined the King and the Aristocracy in making war, Mr. Pitt would have been as strenuous an apostle of peace as ever preached that holy word.

If the new line of distinction which now severs the two sets of men be observed, little doubt will be cast upon our former conclusions. The one is for reform, the other against it. But the old Whig party were always very lukewarm reformers: one section of them were its most bitter enemies—the rest, with few exceptions, its very temperate supporters. Even Mr. Fox's reform of Parliament would have gone into a mighty narrow compass. But there rests no kind of doubt on this as well as other principles having been rather the consequence than the cause of party distinctions; for when Mr. Pitt in opposition, and afterwards in office, brought forward the question, he received a very moderate and divided support from the Whigs; and no small part of the Government which carried the question in 1831, and of the present Reform Government, are Tories who had before been strenuously opposed to all changes whatever in our parliamentary system. That the same Ministry of 1831 was substantially Whig, and carried the question by a far greater effort than ever Mr. Pitt made for its advancement, is not to be doubted. But their influence, nay, their existence depended upon it: they gained more by it, as a party, than by any other course they could have gained. This then can form no exception whatever to the position that where parties are formed mainly for the purpose of obtaining and retaining power, they adopt principles and act upon them, with a view to serve this main object of the party union. The people in a country like this have their weight as well as the Court and the Aristocracy, and their opinions, and feelings must be consulted by party leaders in order to gain their support. Whatever insincerity there may be in the latter, however they may be suspected of professing opinions for the purpose of their policy, the people can have no such sinister motives. Hence a party may take popular ground when in opposition with the view of defeating the Court, and it may also take the same ground in office to fortify itself against a hostile Court or a generally unfriendly Aristocracy.

This induction of facts is incomplete, if the *instantia negativa*, the converse proof, be wanting, of cases where

great principles not espoused by parties, nor made matter of party manœuvring, have had a different fate. Unhappily there are comparatively very few questions of importance which have enjoyed this exemption. One of the greatest of all, however, the Slave Trade is of the number; the Abolition having been first taken up by Thomas Clarkson, a Foxite in opinion, and in Parliament by Mr. Wilberforce, a friend of Mr. Pitt (but neither of them party men), was never made the subject of party distinction. Accordingly, the men of both sides were divided on it, according to the colours of their real opinions and not of their party differences: nor was it ever either supported or opposed by the marshalled strength of faction. The doctrines of Free Trade and the amendment of the Criminal Law furnish other instances of the same rare description. No one can be at any loss to perceive how very differently these questions have been handled from the party ones to which we before adverted. No one can be at a loss to perceive how much truth has gained by the remarkable diversity.

We have hitherto been referring to the fate of great principles,—of general questions; but the same will be found to have been the treatment of subjects more personal and accidental. Mr. Pitt, after a short co-operation with the Whigs, sacrificed them to the prejudices of the King and returned to power, while they retired to their opposition places and habits. If, instead of this result, the negotiations of 1804 had led to a junction of the two great parties, he is a bold man who will take upon himself to affirm that the Whigs would on the Treasury Bench have read Lord St. Vincent's famous 10th Report with the same eyes which glared upon Lord Melville from the opposite side of the House and conducted them to the impeachment of that Minister a few months afterwards. Again, the greatest personal question that ever distracted rather than divided the country, was the treatment of the Queen in 1820. Had the Whigs then been in office under George IV., as they were in habits of party connexion with him in 1806, would they have been so strenuous in opposing

his favourite Bill of Pains and Penalties? It would be very adventurous thing to assert anything of the kind, when we recollect how unreservedly they lent themselves in 1806 to the first persecution of the ill-fated Queen by the "Delicate Investigation," as it was most inappropriately called, which they conducted in secret and behind the back of the accused. The Tories were then in opposition to the Prince and to the Whig ministry; and they bitterly denounced that secret proceeding. Who can doubt that had the Whigs in 1820 been the ministers and proposed the Bill, it would have found as strenuous opposition from the Tories as this Bill found from the Whigs? But are we left to our conjectures upon this point? No such matter. The Tories are now in opposition; the Whigs in office; and a bill of attainer has been defended by the Whigs and opposed by the Tories, having for its avowed object to banish men from their country without a trial, or a hearing, or even a notice; and accomplishing this object by declaring their entrance within their native land a capital offence. Had the Whigs in power brought forward a bill to exile the Queen without hearing her, and to declare her landing in England high treason, we have a right to affirm that the Tories being in opposition would have strenuously resisted such a measure. Two cases more parallel can hardly be imagined; for there was a charge of treason in both; there was the temporary absence of the party accused; there was a riot or tumult expected upon that party's return; there was the wish to prevent such a return; and there was no desire in either the one case or the other to shed a drop of blood, but only a wish to gain the object by a threat. On the other hand, have the Tories any right to affirm that if they had chanced to be in power when the Canada affairs were to be settled, no bills of attainder would have been passed? The forms of law might have been more artificially and skilfully preserved; but that the principles of substantial justice would have been better maintained towards Papineau, and his adherents in 1838 than they were towards Queen Caroline in 1820, we have no right whatever to believe. The Bill of 1820

is the great blot upon their public character, the worst passage by far in the history of their party; and they must have felt while they assented to its iniquities and plunged the country into the most imminent dangers, that they were yielding to the vilest caprices of an unprincipled and tyrannical master.

It must not be supposed that those who concur in these general remarks upon party are pronouncing a very severe censure upon all public men in this country, or placing themselves vainly on an eminence removed from strife, and high above all vulgar contentions—

> Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre,
> Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ,
> Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
> Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
> Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
>
> LUCRET. II.

The blame now cast upon politicians affects them all equally; and is only like that which ethical reasoners on the selfish theory of morals may be supposed to throw upon all human conduct. In fact, that blame applies not to individuals, but to the system; and that system is proved to be bad;—hurtful to the interests of the country, corrupting to the people, injurious to honest principle, and at the very best a clumsy contrivance for carrying on the affairs of the State.

It is partly the result of our monarchical constitution, in which the prince must rule by influence rather than prerogative; but it is much more to be derived from the aristocratical portion of the constitution. The great families in their struggles with each other and against the Crown, have recourse to party leagues, and the people are from time to time drawn into the conflict. The evils which flow from this manner of conducting public affairs are manifest. The two greatest unquestionably are, first, the loss of so many able men to the service of the country as well as the devotion of almost the whole powers of all leading men to party contests and the devotion of a portion of those men to obstructing the public service instead of helping it; and next, the

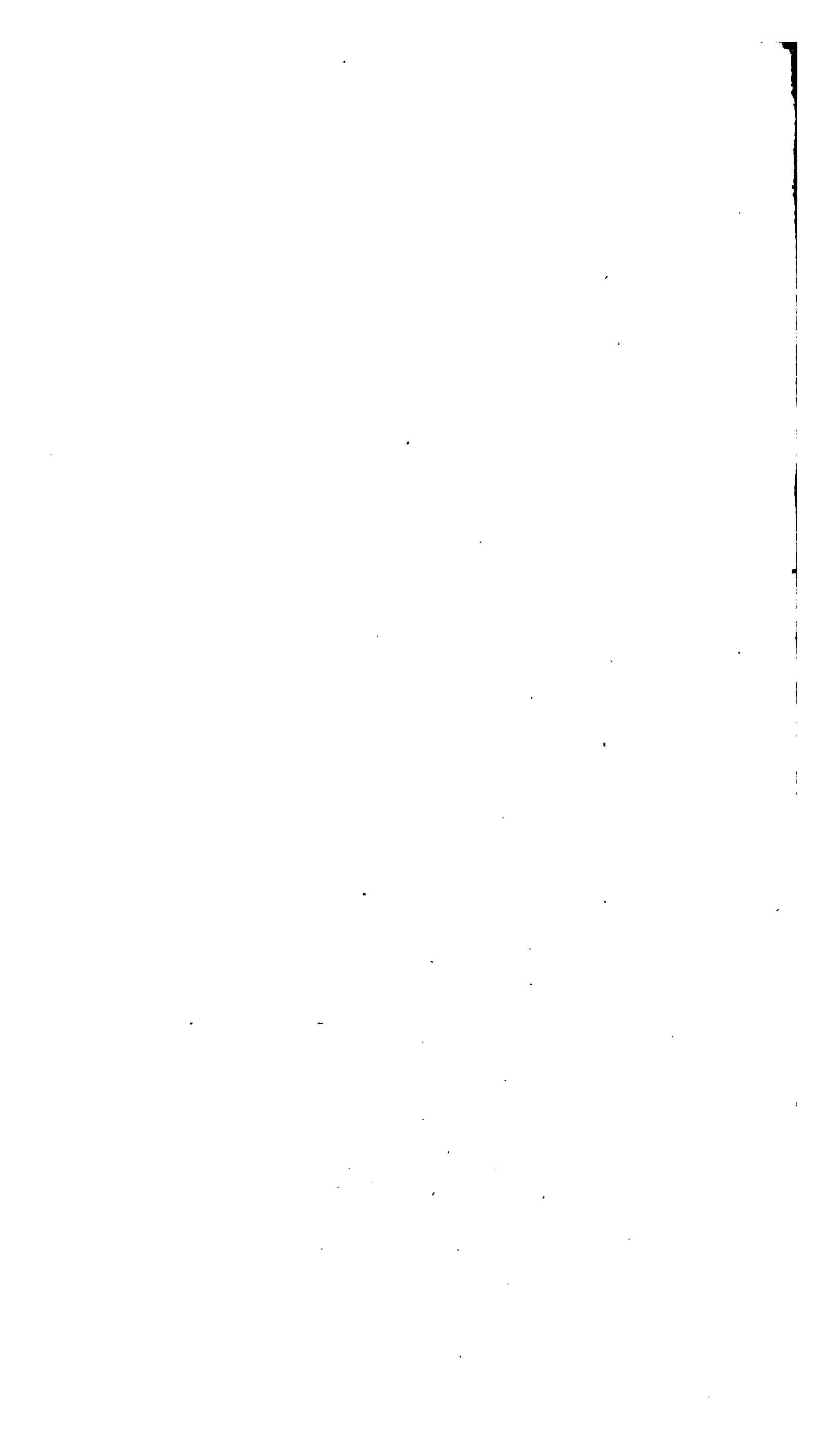
sport which, in playing the party game, is made of the most sacred principles, the duping of the people, and the assumption of their aristocratic leaders to dictate their opinions to them. It is a sorry account of any political machine that it is so constructed, as only to be kept in order by the loss of power and the conflict of forces which the first of these faults implies. It is a clumsy and unwieldy movement which can only be effected by the combined operation of jarring principles, which the panegyrists or rather apologists of these anomalies have commended. But is a radical vice in any system to exclude the people from forming their own opinions, which must, if proceeding from their own impulses, be kept in strict accordance with their interests, that is, with the general good; and it is a flaw if possible still more disastrous, to render the people only tools and instruments of an oligarchy, instead of making their power the main-spring of the whole engine, and their interest the grand object of all its operations.

Of this we may be well assured, that as party has hitherto been known amongst us, it can only be borne during the earlier stages of a nation's political growth. While the people are ignorant of their interests, and as little acquainted with their rights as with their duties, they may be treated by the leading factions as they have hitherto been treated by our own. God be praised, they are not now what they were in the palmy days of factious aristocracy, of the Walpoles, and the Foxes, and the Pelhams—never consulted, and never thought of unless when it was desirable that one mob should bawl out 'Church and King,' and another should echo back 'No Pope, and no Pretender.' They have even made great advances since the close of the American war, and the earlier periods of the French Revolution, when, through fear of the Catholics, the library of Lord Mansfield, and through hatred of the Dissenters, the apparatus of Dr. Priestley, were committed to the flames. Their progress is now rapid, and their success assured in the attainment of all that can qualify them for self-government, emancipate them from pupilage, and entitle them to undertake the management of their own affairs. Nor

will they any more suffer leading men to make up their opinions for them, as doctors do the prescriptions which they are to take, or consent to be the tools and the dupes of party any more.

Let us now by way of contrast, rather than comparison, turn our eye towards some eminent leaders of mankind in countries where no party spirit can ever be shown, or in circumstances where a great danger, threatening all alike, excludes the influence of faction altogether, though only for a season, and while the pressure continues.

Contemporary with George III., and with the statesmen whose faint likenesses we have been surveying, were some of the most celebrated persons whom either the old or the new world have produced. Their talents and their fortunes came also in conflict with those of our own rulers, upon some of the most memorable occasions which have exercised the one or affected the other. It will form no inappropriate appendix to the preceding sketches, if we now endeavour to portray several of those distinguished individuals.



FRANKLIN.

One of the most remarkable men, certainly, of our times, as a politician, or of any age, as a philosopher, was Franklin; who also stands alone in combining together these two characters, the greatest that man can sustain, and in this, that having borne the first part in enlarging science, by one of the greatest discoveries ever made, he bore the second part in founding one of the greatest empires in the world.

In this truly great man everything seems to concur that goes towards the constitution of exalted merit. First, he was the architect of his own fortune. Born in the humblest station, he raised himself by his talents and his industry, first to the place in society which may be attained with the help only of ordinary abilities, great application and good luck; but next to the loftier heights which a daring and happy genius alone can scale; and the poor Printer's boy, who, at one period of his life, had no covering to shelter his head from the dews of night, rent in twain the proud dominion of England, and lived to be the Ambassador of a Commonwealth which he had formed, at the Court of the haughty Monarchs of France who had been his allies.

Then, he had been tried by prosperity as well as adverse fortune, and had passed unhurt through the perils of both. No ordinary apprentice, no common-place journeyman, ever laid the foundations of his independence in habits of industry and temperance more deep than he did, whose genius was afterwards to rank him with the Galileos and the Newtons of the old world. No patrician born to shine in Courts, or assist at the Councils of Monarchs, ever bore his honours in a lofty station more easily, or was less spoilt by the enjoyment of them than this common workman did when negotiating with Royal representatives, or caressed by all the beauty and fashion of the most brilliant Court in Europe.

Again, he was self-taught in all he knew. His hours of study were stolen from those of sleep and of meals, or gained by some ingenious contrivance for reading while the work of his daily calling went on. Assisted by none of the helps which affluence tenders to the studies of the rich, he had to supply the place of tutors, by redoubled diligence, and of commentaries, by repeated perusal. Nay, the possession of books was to be obtained by copying what the art which he himself exercised, furnished easily to others.

Next, the circumstances under which others succumb he made to yield, and bent to his own purposes—a successful leader of a revolt that ended in complete triumph after appearing desperate for years; a great discoverer in philosophy without the ordinary helps to knowledge; a writer famed for his chaste style without a classical education; a skilful negotiator, though never bred to politics; ending as a favourite, nay, a pattern of fashion, when the guest of frivolous Courts, the life which he had begun in garrets and in workshops.

Lastly, combinations of faculties in others deemed impossible, appeared easy and natural in him. The philosopher, delighted in speculation, was also eminently a man of action. Ingenious reasoning, refined and subtle consultation, were in him combined with prompt resolution, and inflexible firmness of purpose. To a lively fancy, he joined a learned and deep reflection; his original and inventive genius stooped to the convenient alliance of the most ordinary prudence in every-day affairs; the mind that soared above the clouds, and was coversant with the loftiest of human contemplations, disdained not to make proverbs and feign parables for the guidance of apprenticed youths and servile maidens; and the hands that sketched a free constitution for a whole continent, or drew down the lightning from heaven, easily and cheerfully lent themselves to simplify the apparatus by which truths were to be illustrated, or discoveries pursued.

His whole course both in acting and in speculation was simple and plain, ever preferring the easiest and the shortest road, nor ever having recourse to any but the

simplest means to compass his ends. His policy rejected all refinements, and aimed at accomplishing its purposes by the most rational and obvious expedients. His language was unadorned, and used as the medium of communicating his thoughts, not of raising admiration; but it was pure, expressive, racy. His manner of reasoning was manly and cogent, the address of a rational being to others of the same order; and so concise, that preferring decision to discussion, he never exceeded a quarter of an hour in any public address. His correspondence upon business, whether private or on state affairs, is a model of clearness and compendious shortness; nor can any state papers surpass in dignity and impression, those of which he is believed to have been the author in the earlier part of the American revolutionary war. His mode of philosophising was the purest application of the inductive principle, so eminently adapted to his nature, and so clearly dictated by common sense, that we can have little doubt it would have been suggested by Franklin, if it had not been unfolded by Bacon, though it is as clear that in this case it would have been expounded in far more simple terms. But of all this great man's scientific excellencies, the most remarkable is the smallness, the simplicity, the apparent inadequacy, of the means which he employed in his experimental researches. His discoveries were made with hardly any apparatus at all; and if, at any time, he had been led to employ instruments of a somewhat less ordinary description, he never rested satisfied until he had, as it were, afterwards translated the process, by resolving the problem with such simple machinery, that you might say he had done it wholly unaided by apparatus. The experiments by which the identity of lightning and electricity was demonstrated, were made with a sheet of brown paper, a bit of twine, a silk thread, and an iron key.

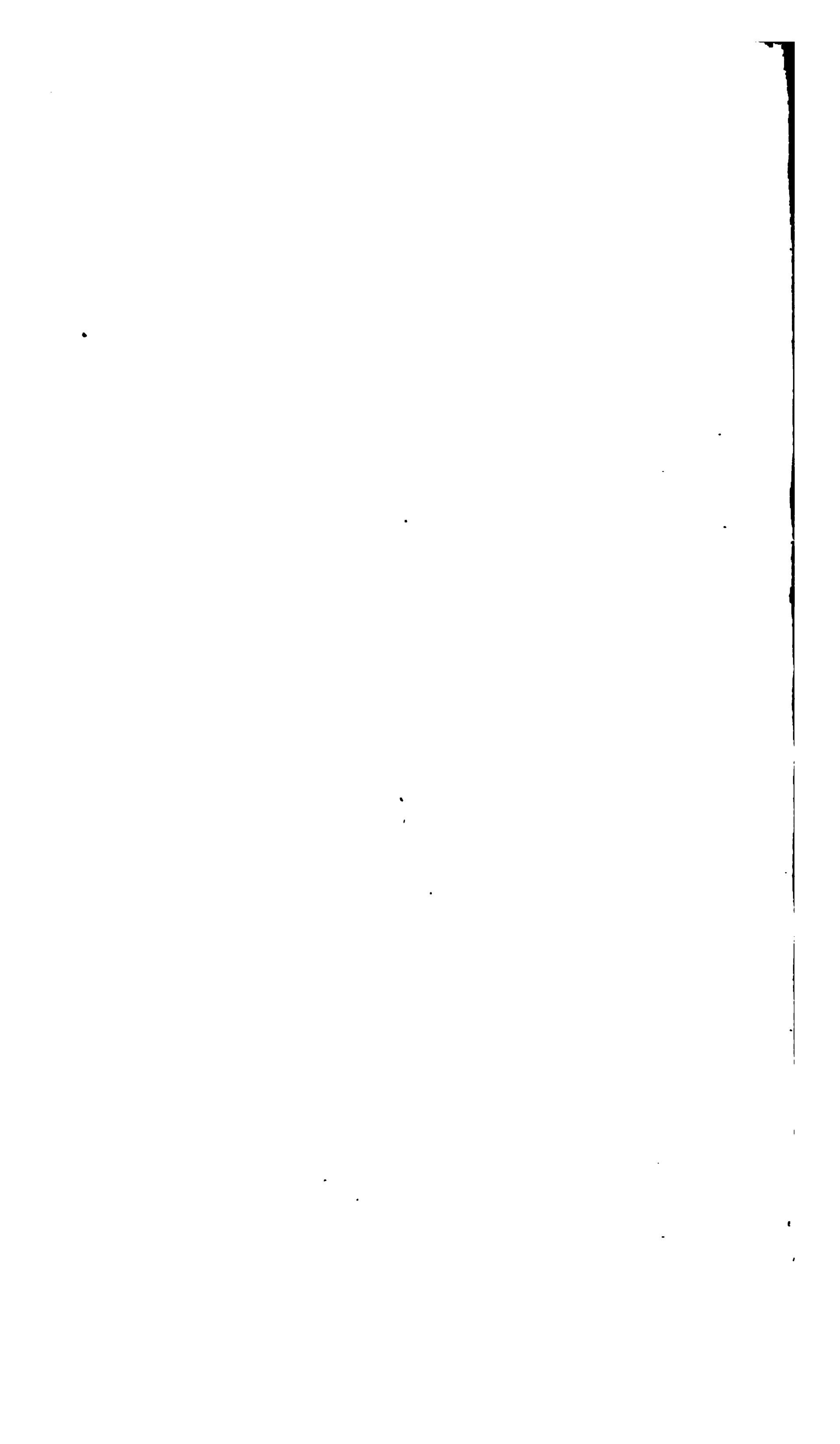
Upon the integrity of this great man, whether in public or in private life, there rests no stain. Strictly honest, and even scrupulously punctual in all his dealings, he preserved in the highest fortune that regularity which he had practised as well as inculcated in the lowest.

The phrase which he once used when interrupted in his proceedings upon the most arduous and important affairs, by a demand of some petty item in a long account—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn,"—has been cited against him as proving the laxity of his dealings when in trust of public money; it plainly proves the reverse; for he well knew that in a country abounding in discussion, and full of bitter personal animosities, nothing could be gained of immunity by refusing to produce his vouchers at the fitting time; and his venturing to use such language demonstrates that he knew his conduct to be really above all suspicion.

In domestic life he was faultless, and in the intercourse of society, delightful. There was a constant good humour and a playful wit, easy and of high relish, without any ambition to shine, the natural fruit of his lively fancy, his solid, natural good sense, and his cheerful temper, that gave his conversation an unspeakable charm, and alike suited every circle, from the humblest to the most elevated. With all his strong opinions, so often solemnly declared, so imperishably recorded in his deeds, he retained a tolerance for those who differed with him which could not be surpassed in men whose principles hang so loosely about them as to be taken up for a convenient cloak, and laid down when found to impede their progress. In his family he was everything that worth, warm affections, and sound prudence could contribute, to make a man both useful and amiable, respected and beloved. In religion, he would by many be reckoned a latitudinarian; yet it is certain that his mind was imbued with a deep sense of the Divine perfections, a constant impression of our accountable nature, and a lively hope of future enjoyment. Accordingly, his death-bed, the test of both faith and works, was easy and placid, resigned and devout, and indicated at once an unflinching retrospect of the past, and a comfortable assurance of the future.

If we turn from the truly great man whom we have been contemplating, to his celebrated contemporary in

the Old World, who only affected the philosophy that Franklin possessed, and employed his talents for civil and military affairs, in extinguishing that independence which Franklin's life was consecrated to establish, the contrast is marvellous indeed, between the Monarch and the Printer.



FREDERIC II.

In one particular this celebrated Prince may be said to resemble the great Republican. His earlier years were spent in the school of adversity. Whether the influence of this discipline, usually so propitious to the character of great men, was exerted in chastening his principles, and in calling forth and regulating those feelings which the education of a court tends either to stifle or pervert, may be learnt not only from the private history of his reign, but from some anecdotes preserved, of his conduct immediately after he came to the crown; while as yet, his heart could not have become callous from the habits of uncontrolled dominion, nor his principles unsettled by the cares of his turbulent career. When William discovered his son's plan for escaping from Prussia, he caused him to be arrested, together with his confidential friend De Catt, and instantly brought to trial before a military commission. The interposition of Austria alone saved the prince's life; but he was thrown into prison at the fort of Custrin, where his friend was beheaded on a scaffold raised before his apartment to the level of the window, from which he was forced to view this afflicting spectacle. He was so much overpowered, that he sunk senseless into the chair which had been placed to keep him at the window, and only recovered to bewail, with every appearance of the most poignant feeling, the fate of this unhappy young man, who had fallen a sacrifice to his faithful attachment. The savage conduct of William, indeed, left him scarcely any other occupation; his confinement was as strict, and his treatment as harsh as that of the meanest felon. By degrees, however, his guards watched him less closely, and he was even permitted to steal out under cover of night, by circuitous paths, to a chateau in the neighbourhood, the residence of a very amiable nobleman's family, who received him with the greatest

kindness, and exposed themselves to constant risk on his account. Among them he spent as much of his time, for above a year, as he could gain from the humanity or treachery of his jailer. It was chiefly with music and reading that he consoled himself in the gloom of his prison; and those good folks not only furnished him with books and candles, but made little concerts for him in the evenings, when he could escape to enjoy their society. The young Wrechs (for that was the name of this family) were sufficiently accomplished and sprightly to gain Frederic's esteem. He delighted much in their company; and though they were so numerous, that the baron was kept in narrow circumstances by the necessary expenses of their maintenance and education, he contrived, by straitening himself still more, to scrape together supplies of money to the amount of above six thousand rix dollars, with which he assisted, from time to time, his royal guest.

Such were the obligations which Frederic owed, during this eventful period of his life, first to the House of Austria, whose spirited and decisive interference saved him from the scaffold; next, to the unfortunate De Catt, who had sacrificed his life in the attempt to aid his escape; and, lastly, to the amiable family of the Wrechs, who, at the imminent risk of their lives, and at a certain expense little suited to their moderate circumstances, had tenderly alleviated the hardships of his confinement. As Frederic mounted the throne a short time after he was set at liberty, we might naturally expect that the impression of favours like these would outlive the ordinary period of royal memory. The first act of his reign was to invade the hereditary dominions of Austria, and reduce to the utmost distress the daughter and representative of the monarch whose timely interposition had saved his life, by heading a powerful combination against her, after stripping her of an invaluable province. The family and relations of De Catt never received, during the whole of his reign, even a smile of royal favour. To the Wrechs he not only never repaid a creutzer of the money which they had pinched themselves to raise for his accommodation, but manifested a degree of

coldness amounting to displeasure; so that this worthy and accomplished family were in a kind of disgrace during his time, never received well at court, nor promoted to any of the employments which form in some sort the patrimony of the aristocracy. They were favoured by Prince Henry; and all that they could boast of owing to the king was, to use the expression of his most zealous panegyrist, that "*he did not persecute them*" on account of his brother's patronage. His defenders screened this ungrateful conduct behind the Prussian law, which prohibits the loan of money to princes of the blood, and declares all debts contracted by them null. But since the *King* was to govern himself by the enactments of this law, it would have been well if the *Prince*, too, had considered them. We have heard of Lewis XII. proudly declaring that it was unworthy the King of France to revenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orleans. It was reserved for the unfeeling meanness of Frederic to show us, that the King was not bound by the highest obligations of the Prince of Prussia—that he could shelter himself from the claims of honour and gratitude, by appealing to laws which had been generously violated in his behalf.

But it may be fair to mention the solitary instance of a contrary description, which we can find in comparing his conduct on the throne with the favours received during his misfortunes. He had been assisted in his musical relaxations at Potsdam by the daughter of a citizen, who, without any personal charms, had the accomplishment most valuable to the Prince, secluded as he was from all society, and depending for amusement almost entirely on his flute. His father no sooner heard of this intimacy, than he supposed there must be some criminal intercourse between the young amateurs, and proceeded to meet the tender passion by the universal remedy which he was in the habit of administering to his subjects. The lady was seized, delivered over to the executioner, and publicly whipped through the streets of Potsdam. The cruel disgrace, of course, put an end to the concerts, and to her estimation in society. When Frederic came to the throne, she was reduced to

the humble station of a hackney-coachman's wife; and with a rare effort of gratitude and generosity, he was pleased to settle upon her a pension, of very little less than thirty-five pounds a-year.

There is nothing in the history of his after life that shows any improvement in the feelings with which he began it, and which his own sufferings had not chastened, nor the kindness that relieved them, softened. In one of his battles, happening to turn his head round, he saw his nephew, the Hereditary Prince, fall to the ground, his horse being killed under him. Frederic, thinking the rider was shot, cried, without stopping as he rode past, "Ah! there's the Prince of Prussia killed; let his saddle and bridle be taken care of!"

William Augustus, the King's elder brother, and heir apparent to the crown, had for many years been his principal favourite. He was a prince of great abilities, and singularly amiable character—modest almost to timidity—and repaying the friendship of Frederic by a more than filial devotion. He had served near his person in all his campaigns, had constantly distinguished himself in war, and after the disastrous battle of Collin, was entrusted with the command of half the retreating army. While the King succeeded in bringing off his own division safe into Saxony, the Prince, attacked on all hands by the whole force of the Austrians, suffered several inconsiderable losses on his march, and gained the neighbourhood of Dresden with some difficulty. He was received, as well as his whole staff, with the greatest marks of displeasure. For several days the King spoke to none of them; and then sent a message by one of his generals—"*Que pour bien faire, il devoit leur faire trancher la tête, excepter au general Winterfeldt.*" The Prince was of too feeling a disposition not to suffer extremely from this treatment. He addressed a letter to the King, in which he stated that the fatigues of the campaign, and his distress of mind, had totally injured his health; and received for answer a permission to retire, couched in the most bitter and humiliating reproaches. From this time he lived entirely in the bosom of his family, a prey to the deepest

melancholy, but retaining for the King his sentiments of warm attachment and respect bordering upon veneration, although never permitted to approach his person. One interview only brought the brothers together after their unhappy separation. The different members of the Royal family, during the most disastrous period of the Seven years' war, when the existence of the house of Brandenburg seemed to depend on a diminution in the number of its enemies, united their voice in exhorting the King to attempt making such a peace with France and Sweden as might be consistent with the honour of his crown. Prince William was entreated to lay their wishes before him; and, oppressed as he was with disease, trembling to appear in his brother's presence, scarcely daring to hope even a decorous reception, he yet thought his duty required this effort, and he supplicated an audience. Frederic allowed him to detail fully his whole views, and was willing to hear from him the unanimous prayers of his relations. He appeared before the King; besought him, conjured him, with tears in his eyes, and embraced his knees with all the warmth of fraternal affection, and all the devotion of the most enthusiastic loyalty. No sentiment of pity for the cause he pleaded, nor any spark of his own ancient affection was kindled in Frederic's bosom at so touching a scene. He remained silent and stern during the whole interview, and then put an end to it by these words: "*Monsieur, vous partirez demain pour Berlin : allez faire des enfans : vous n'êtes bon qu'à cela.*" The Prince did not long survive this memorable audience.

Such was the fate of his favourite brother. The Princess Amelia was his youngest and most beloved sister. She was one of the most charming and accomplished women in Europe. But after being cajoled by her elder sister, Ulrica, out of a Royal marriage, which that intriguer obtained for herself, Amelia fell in love with the well-known Baron Trenck, who was by her brother shut up in a fortress for ten years; and Frederic daily saw pining away before his eyes his favourite sister, become blind and paralyzed with mental suffering, and saw it without a pang or sigh, much more

without a thought of relieving it by ceasing to persecute her friend.

Having contemplated this monarch in the relations of domestic life, it is now fit that we should view him among his friends. Of these there was absolutely not one whom he did not treat with exemplary harshness, except Jordan, who indeed lived only a few years after Frederic came to the throne, while he was too much occupied with war to allow him time for mixing with that select society, in which he afterwards vainly hoped to enjoy the pleasures of entire equality, and where always, sooner or later, the King prevailed over the companion. Of all his friends, the Marquis d'Argens seems to have been the most cordially and most respectfully attached to his person. In the field he was his constant companion; their time in winter quarters was passed in each other's society. At one time the King had no other confidant; and he it was who turned aside his fixed purpose to commit suicide, when, at the most desperate crisis of his affairs, life had become unbearable. But d'Argens committed the fault seldom pardoned by any prince, by Frederic never; he acted as if he believed his Royal friend sincere in desiring that they should live on equal terms. The pretext for finally discarding his ancient companion was poor in the extreme. When the marquis consented to come into Frederic's service, and leave his own country, it was upon the express condition that he should have permission to return home when he reached the age of seventy. He had a brother in France, to whom he was tenderly attached, and owed many obligations. As he approached this period of life, his brother prepared a house and establishment for his reception; and nothing was wanting but the king's leave to make him retire from a service to which he was now ill adapted by his years, and rendered averse by the coldness daily more apparent in the treatment he received. But Frederic, notwithstanding the bargain, and in spite of his diminished attachment to this faithful follower, peremptorily refused to grant his discharge: he allowed him a sort of furlough to see his brother, and took his promise to return in six months. When the visit

was paid, and the marquis had arrived at Bourg on his return, the exertions which he made to get back within the stipulated time threw him into a dangerous illness. As soon as the six months expired, Frederic receiving no letter and hearing nothing of him, became violently enraged, and ordered his pensions to be stopped, and his name to be struck off the lists with disgrace. The account of these precipitate measures reached the marquis as he was on the point of continuing his journey after his recovery. And when he died, the king caused a monument to be raised to his memory, as a proof that he repented of his harsh and hasty proceedings against him.

The treatment which Marshal Schwerin met with for gaining the battle of Molwitz, is well known. In order to execute the manœuvre upon which the victory depended, it was necessary that the king should retire from the field at a moment when success was almost despaired of. He consented, and the tide was turned by the consummate skill of the general. Ever after, Frederic treated him with marked coldness; neglected him as far as the necessity of claiming assistance from his genius would permit; and, finally, was the cause of his exposing himself to certain destruction at the battle of Prague, where this great master of the art of war fell undistinguished in the crowd, leaving his family to the neglect of an ungrateful sovereign, and his memory to be honoured by the enemy whom he had conquered.*

After Frederic had quarelled with Voltaire, he heard of a Chevalier Masson, whose wit and accomplishments were represented as sufficient to replace those which he had just lost by his own vanity and caprice. It was with difficulty that this gentleman could be induced to quit the French service, in which he stood high; and when he arrived at Berlin, though it very soon became apparent that Voltaire's place was not one of those which are so easily supplied, yet he had qualities sufficient to

* The monument erected in the neighbourhood of Prague, upon the spot where the greatest of the Prussian captains fell, was raised by the Emperor Joseph II.

recommend him, and was admitted instantly to the royal circles. A single indiscreet sally of wit ruined him in the king's favour. He retired in disgust to his study, where he lived the life of a hermit for many years, his existence unknown to the world, and the most important of its concerns equally unknown to him. As he had thus sacrificed all his prospects to accept of Frederic's patronage, and had wasted the prime of his life in attending upon his capricious pleasure, it might have been expected that he would at least have been permitted to enjoy his poor pension, so dearly purchased, to the end of his inoffensive days. But after twenty years of seclusion, such as we have described, he had his name suddenly struck from the lists, and his appointments stopped, and was obliged to seek his own country with the savings which his parsimony had enabled him to make.

The same selfish spirit, or carelessness towards the feelings and claims of others, which marked Frederic's conduct to his family and friends, was equally conspicuous in his treatment of inferior dependants, both in the relations of society and of business. In his familiar intercourse with those whom he permitted to approach him, we can find no line steadily drawn for the regulation of his own demeanour, or of theirs. His inclination seems to have been, that he should always maintain the manifest superiority, without owing it in appearance to his exalted station; but as soon as he lost, or was near losing, this first place in a contest upon fair terms, he was ready suddenly to call in the aid of the king. Thus it perpetually happened, that a conversation begun upon an equal footing, was terminated by a single look of authority from the royal companion. He never failed to indulge his sarcastic humour and high spirits in sallies directed with little delicacy or discrimination against all around him; and unless he happened to have, at the moment, such answers as might, without any possibility of resistance, crush those whom his railleries had forced into a repartee, he was sure to supply the defect by an appeal to weapons which he alone of the circle could use. It is not describing his behaviour

correctly, to say that in the hours of relaxation he was fond of forgetting the monarch, provided his company never forgot him. This would at least have been one general rule, one principle of behaviour to which all might conform as soon as it was made known. But Frederic laid down and took up his sceptre at moments which his guests could never divine; and, far from insisting that they should always have it in their eyes, it would often have been a ground for his using it to stop the colloquy, if he had perceived them persevere in addressing the sovereign, when he was determined they should talk to a comrade. The only rule then of his society, was entire submission to his caprices; not merely a passive obedience, but a compliance with every whim and turn of his mind; sometimes requiring to be met with exertions, sometimes to be received in quiet. That we may form some idea of the nature and extent of this meanness, so poor in one who called himself a Royal Philospher, it is proper to remark, that all those wits or other dependants with whom he passed his time, were entirely supported by his pensions; and that, beside the dangers of a fortress, any resistance was sure to cost them and their families their daily bread.

His ordinary mode of enjoying society was, to send for a few of the philosophers who were always in readiness, either when he dined, or had an hour's leisure from business, which he wished to beguile by the recreations of talking and receiving worship. On one of these occasions, the savans in waiting were, Quintus Icilius* and Thiebault; and it happened that the king, after giving his opinion at great length, and with his usual freedom, upon the arrangement of Providence, which conceals from mortals the period of their lives, called upon them to urge whatever could be stated in its defence. Quintus, unwarily supposing that he really wished to hear the question discussed, gave a reason,

* This was a Leyden professor, originally named Guichard, who, being fond of military science, had been transformed into a colonel of chasseurs by the king; and, then, from his admiration of Julius Cæsar's aide-de-camp, had been ordered to assume the name of Quintus Icilius.

which appears completely satisfactory. The philosopher of Sans-Souci, however, only desired his guest to take the opposite side of the argument, in the conviction that they were not to invalidate his own reasoning. And when Quintus fairly destroyed the force of it, by suggesting, that the certain knowledge of our latter end would infallibly diminish the ardour of our exertions for a considerable period beforehand, the king thought proper to break out into a violent personal invective. "Ici," (says Thiebault, who witnessed the extremely singular but by no means infrequent scene,) "la foudre partit aussi subite qu'imprevue." '*Cette facon de juger,*' lui dit le Roi, '*est bonne pour vous âme de boue et de fange! Mais apprenez, si toutefois vous le pouvez, qus ceux qui ont l'âme noble, elevée, et sensible aux charmes de la vertu, ne raisonment point sur des maximes aussi miserables et aussi honteuses! Apprenez, Monsieur, que l'honnête homme fait toujours le bien tant qu'il peut le faire, et uniquement parce que c'est le bien, sans rechercher quels sont ceux qui en profiteront; mais vous ne sentez point ces choses; vous n'êtes point fait pour les sentir.*' Vol. I., p. 84.

At one of his literary entertainments, when, in order to promote free conversation, he reminded the circle that there was no monarch present, and that every one might think aloud, the conversation chanced to turn upon the faults of different governments and rulers. General censures were passing from mouth to mouth, with the kind of freedom which such hints were calculated, and apparently intended, to inspire. But Frederic suddenly put a stop to the topic by these words—"*Paix! paix! Messieurs; prenez garde, voilâ le roi que arrive; il ne faut pas qu'il vous entende, car peut-être se croiroit-il obligé d'être encore plus méchant que vous.*" V., p. 329.

These sketches may serve to illustrate the conduct of Frederic in society, and to show how far he could forget his power in his familiar intercourse with inferiors. As yet, we have seen only caprice, and that meanness, or, to call it by the right name, cowardice, which consists in trampling upon the fallen, and fighting with those who

are bound. His treatment of persons employed in his service, and his manner of transacting business with them, presents us with equal proofs of a tyrannical disposition, and examples of injustice and cruelty, altogether unparalleled in the history of civilized monarchies. It is well known that a large proportion of the Prussian army owes its origin to a system of crimping, which the recruiting officers carry on in foreign states, and chiefly in the distant parts of the empire. As Frederic II. did not introduce this odious practice, he might, perhaps, be allowed to escape severe censure for not abolishing it generally; but there can be only one opinion upon his conduct in those particular cases which came to his knowledge, and where his attention was specifically called to the grievous injuries sustained by individuals. Of the many anecdotes which have been preserved, relative to this point, one sample may suffice. A French captain of cavalry, returning to his native country, after a long absence in the West Indies, was seized, in his journey, along the Rhine, by some Prussian recruiting officers; his servant was spirited away, and he was himself sent to the army as a private soldier, in which capacity he was forced to serve during the rest of the Seven years' war, against the cause, be it remarked, of his own country. In vain he addressed letter after letter to his friends, acquainting them of his cruel situation; the Prussian post-office was too well regulated to let any of these pass. His constant memorials to the king were received indeed, but not answered. After the peace was concluded, he was marched with his regiment into garrison; and at the next review, the king, coming up to his colonel, inquired if a person named M—— was still in the corps. Upon his being produced, the King offered him a commission; he declined it, and received his discharge.

It was thus that Frederic obtained, by kidnapping, the troops whom he used in plundering his neighbours. His finances were frequently indebted to similar means for their supply. The King's favourite secretary, M. Galser, by his orders, caused fifteen millions of ducats to

be made in a very secret manner, with a third of base metal in their composition. This sum was then entrusted to a son of the Jew Ephraim, so well known in his history of Frederic's coinage, for the purpose of having it circulated in Poland, where it was accordingly employed in buying up every portable article of value that could be found. The Poles, however, soon discovered that they had been imposed upon, and contrived to transfer the loss to their neighbours, by purchasing with the new ducats whatever they could procure in Russia. The Russians, in like manner, found out the cheat, and complained so loudly that the Empress interfered, and made inquiries, which led to a discovery of the quarter whence the issue had originally come. She then ordered the bad money to be brought into her treasury, and exchanged it for good coin. She insisted upon Frederic taking the false ducats at their nominal value, which he did not dare to refuse, but denied that he had any concern in the transaction; and to prove this, sent for his agent Galser, to whom he communicated the dilemma in which he was, and the necessity of giving him up as the author of the imposture. Galser objected to so dishonourable a proposal. The King flew into a passion; kicked him violently on the shins, according to his custom: sent him to the fortress of Spandaw for a year and a half, and then banished him to a remote village of Mecklenburg.

Frederic acted towards his officers upon a principle the more unjust, as well as unfeeling, that can be imagined. It was his aim to encourage military service among the higher ranks: the commonalty he conceived were adapted for all the meaner employments in the state, and should not occupy those stations in the army which were, he thought, the birthright of the aristocracy. But instead of carrying this view into effect, by the only arrangement which was reconcilable with good faith—establishing a certain standard of rank below which no one should be admitted to hold a commission either in peace or in war—he allowed persons of all descriptions to enter the army as officers, when there was any occa-

sion for their services, and, after the necessity had ceased, dismissed those whose nobility appeared questionable. Thus, nothing could be more terrible to the brave men, who for years had led his troops to victory, or shared in their distresses, than the return of peace. After sacrificing their prospects in life, their best years, their health, with their ease, to the most painful service, and sought, through toils and wounds, and misery, the provision which a certain rank in the profession affords, they were liable, at a moment's warning, to be turned ignominiously out of the army, whose fortunes they had followed, because the king either discovered, or fancied, that their family was deficient in rank.

We shall pass over the extreme jealousy with which Frederic treated all those to whom he was under the necessity of confiding any matters of state. Nothing, in the history of eastern manners, exceeds the rigorous confinement of the cabinet secretaries. But we shall proceed to an example of the respect which the Justinian of the North, the author of the Frederician code, paid to the person of those entrusted with the administration of justice in his dominions. This great lawgiver seems never to have discovered the propriety of leaving his judges to investigate the claims of suitors, any more than he could see the advantage of committing to tradesmen and farmers the management of their private affairs. In the progress which he made round the states at the season of the reviews, he used to receive from all quarters the complaints of those who thought themselves aggrieved by the course of justice; and because he had to consider the whole of these cases in addition to all the other branches of his employment, he concluded that he must be a more competent arbiter than they whose lives are devoted to the settlement of one part of such disputes. In one of his excursions, a miller, a tenant of his own, complained to him that his stream was injured by a neighbouring proprietor; and the king ordered his chancellor to have the complaint investigated. The suit was brought in form, and judgment given against the miller. Next year he renewed his application, and affirmed that

his narrative of the facts was perfectly true; yet the court had nonsuited him. The King remitted the cause to the second tribunal, with injunctions to be careful in doing the man justice: he was, however, again cast; and once more complained bitterly to the king, who secretly sent a major of his army to examine on the spot the question upon which his two highest judicatures had decided, and to report. The gallant officer, who was also a neighbour of the miller, reported in his favour; and two other persons, commissioned in the same private manner, returned with similar answers. Frederic immediately summoned his chancellor and the three judges who had determined the cause; he received them in a passion, would not allow them to speak a word in their defence; upbraided them as unjust judges, nay, as miscreants; and wrote out with his own hand a sentence in favour of the miller, with full cost, and a sum as damages which he had never claimed. He then dismissed the chancellor from his office, with language too abusive to be repeated, and, after violently kicking the three judges on the shins, pushed them out of his closet, and sent them to prison at the fortress of Spandaw. All the other judges and ministers of justice were clearly of opinion, that the sentence originally given against the miller was a right one, and that the case admitted of no doubt. As for the chancellor, it was universally allowed that the matter came not within his jurisdiction; and that he could not possibly have known anything of the decision. At last a foreign journalist undertook the investigation of the business; and being placed beyond the limits of the royal philosopher's caprice, he published a statement which left no shadow of argument in the miller's favour. As Frederic attended to what was written abroad, and in French, Linguet's production quickly opened his eyes. Not a word was said in public; none of those measures were adopted, by which a great mind would have rejoiced to acknowledge such errors, and offer some atonement to outraged justice. An irritable vanity alone seemed poorly to regulate the ceremony of propitiation; and he who had been mean enough to insult the persons

of his judges in the blindness of anger, could scarcely be expected, after his eyes were opened to show that pride which makes men cease to deserve blame, by avowing, while they atone for, their faults. Orders were *secretly* given to the miller's adversary, that he should not obey the sentence. With the same *secrecy*, a compensation was made to the miller himself. The three judges, after lingering many months in prison, were *quietly* liberated: the chancellor was allowed to remain in disgrace, because he had been most of all injured: and the faithful subjects of his majesty knew too well their duty and his power, to interrupt this paltry silence by any whispers upon what had passed.

If this system of interference, this intermeddling and controlling spirit, thus appeared, even in the judicial department, much more might it be looked for in the other branches of his administration. It was, in truth, the vice of his whole reign; not even suspended in its exercise during war, but raging with redoubled violence, when the comparative idleness of peace left his morbid activity to prey upon itself. If any one is desirous of seeing how certainly a government is unsuccessful in trade and manufactures, he may consult the sketches of this boasted statesman's speculations in that line, as profitably as the accounts which have been published of the royal works and fabrics in Spain. But there are particulars in the policy of Frederic, exceeding, for absurdity and violence, whatever is to be met with in the descriptions of Spanish political economy. We have only room for running over a few detached examples:—When a china manufactory was to be set a-going at Berlin on the royal account, it was thought necessary to begin by forcing a market for the wares. Accordingly the Jews, who cannot marry without the royal permission, were obliged to pay for their licenses by purchasing a certain quantity of the king's cups and saucers at a fixed price. The introduction of the silk culture was a favourite scheme with Frederic; and to make silk-worms spin, and mulberry trees grow in the Prussian sands, no expense must be spared. Vast houses and manufactories were built

for such as chose to engage in the speculation; a direct premium was granted on the exportation of silk stuffs; and medals were awarded to the workmen who produced above five pounds of the article in a year. But nature is very powerful, even among Prussian grenadiers. In the lists of exports we find no mention made of silk, while it forms a considerable and a regular branch of the goods imported. The settlement of colonists in waste lands was another object of eminent attention and proportionate expense. Foreign families were enticed and transported by the crimps whom he employed all over Europe for recruiting his forces; they received grants of land; were provided with houses, implements, and live-stock, and furnished with subsistence, until their farms became sufficiently productive to support them. Frederic called this supplying the blanks which war made in his population. His rage for encouraging the introduction of new speculations was quite ungovernable. No sooner did his emissaries inform him of any ingenious manufacturer or mechanic, in France or elsewhere, than he bribed him to settle in Berlin, by the most extravagant terms. When he found the success of the project too slow, or its gains, from the necessity of circumstances, fell short of expectation, he had only one way of getting out of the scrape;—he broke his bargain with the undertaker, and generally sent him to a fortress; in the course of which transaction, it always happened that somebody interfered, under the character of a minister, a favourite, &c., to pillage both parties. Experience never seemed to correct this propensity. It was at an advanced period of his reign that he sent orders to his ambassadors to find him a general projector—a man who might be employed wholly in fancying new schemes, and discussing those which should be submitted to him. Such a one was accordingly procured, and tempted, by large bribes, to settle at Potsdam.

Frederic's grand instrument in political economy was the establishment of monopolies. Whether an art was to be encouraged, or a public taste modified, or a revenue gleaned, or the balance of trade adjusted, a mo-

nopoly was the expedient. Thus the exclusive privilege was granted to one family, of supplying Berlin and Potsdam with fire-wood; the price was instantly doubled; and the king received no more than eight thousand a year of the profits. Well did the celebrated Helvetius remark of some applications for such contracts, upon which the king demanded his sentiments, "Sire, you need not trouble yourself with reading them through; they all speak the same language—'*We beseech your Majesty to grant us leave to rob your people of such a sum; in consideration of which we engage to pay you a certain share of the pillage.*'" Frederic was led to conceive that his subjects drank too much coffee in proportion to their means, and ate too little nourishing food. The universal remedy was applied; and the supply of all the coffee used within his dominions given exclusively to a company. The price was thus, as he had wished, greatly raised, and some of the spoil shared with his treasury; but the taste of the people remained as determined in favour of coffee as before, and of course was much more detrimental to their living. Tobacco, in like manner, he subjected to a strict monopoly; and when he wished to have arms furnished very cheap to his troops, he had again recourse to his usual expedient: he conferred upon the house of Daum and Splikberg, armorers, the exclusive privilege of refining sugar, on condition that they should sell him muskets and caps at a very low price. In all his fiscal policy, he was an anxious observer of the balance of trade, and never failed to cast a pensive eye upon the tables of exports and imports. "Every year," says one of his panegyrists, "did he calculate with extreme attention the sums which came into his states and those which went out; and he saw, with uneasiness, that the balance was not so favourable as it ought to be."* After all his monopolies and premiums for the encouragement of production, he found, it seems, that the exports of his kingdom could not be augmented. "Therefore," adds this author, he had only one re-

* Thiebault, iv. 127.

source left—to diminish the importation;" which he accordingly attempted, by new monopolies and prohibitions.

It remains, before completing our estimate of Frederic's character, that we should recollect his public conduct in the commonwealth of Europe, where he was born to hold so conspicuous a station.—And here, while we wonder at the abilities which led him to success, it is impossible not to admit that they belonged to that inferior order which can brook an alliance with profligacy and entire want of principle. The history of the Prussian monarchy, indeed, is that of an empire scraped together by industry, and fraud, and violence, from neighbouring states. By barter, and conquest, and imposture, its manifold districts have been gradually brought into one dynasty; not a patch of the motley mass, but recalls the venality or weakness of the surrounding powers, and the unprincipled usurpations of the house of Brandenburgh. But it was Frederic II. whose strides, far surpassing those of his ancestors, raised his family to the rank of a primary power; enabled him to baffle the coalition which his ambition had raised against him; and gave the means of forming, himself, a new conspiracy for the destruction of whatever principles had been held most sacred by the potentates of modern times. It is in vain that we dissemble with ourselves, and endeavour to forget our own conduct at that fatal crisis. We may rail at Jacobinism, and the French Revolution—impute to the timidity of the other powers the insolent dominion of Republican France—and exhaust our effeminate license of tongue upon the chief, who, by wielding her destinies, made himself master of half the world. Europe suffered by, and is still suffering for, the partition of Poland. Then it was, that public principles were torn up and scattered before the usurpers of the day;—then it was, that England and France poorly refused to suspend their mutual animosities, and associate in support of right, when other states, forgetting greater jealousies, were combined to violate the law;—then it was, that power became the measure of duty—that ambition learnt all

the lessons which it has since been practising of *arrondissements,* and equivalents, and indemnities—that an assurance of impunity and success was held out to those who might afterwards abandon all principle, provided they were content with a share of the plunder, and that the lesson was learnt which the settlers of Europe practised in 1814 and 1815, the lesson which they are again practising in 1839, of transferring from the weak to the strong whatever portions of the territory it may please them to take, without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants more than the cattle that drag the plough through their fields. While we look back with detestation, then, on the conduct of those powers who perpetrated the crime, and most of all on Frederic, who contrived it, let us also reflect, with shame, on the pusillanimity of those who saw, yet helped not; and, in justice to the memory of a truly great man, let us bear in mind, that he who afterwards warned us against the usurpations of France at their nearer approach, raised his voice against the dereliction of principle which paved the way for them in the Partition of Poland.*

The details into which we have entered, as descriptive of Frederic's character, may seem to be out of keeping in a sketch like this. But the universal belief of his greatness, and the disposition to exalt his merits because of the success which followed his ambition, renders it necessary to reduce those merits to their true dimensions, which no general description could effect.

Upon the whole, all well-regulated minds will turn from a minute view of this famous personage, impressed with no veneration for his character, either as a member of society, a ruler of the people, or a part of the European community. That he possessed the talents of an accomplished warrior, and an elegant wit, it would be absurd to deny, and superfluous to demonstrate. He has left us, in his victories and his writings, the best proofs; and all that is preserved of his conversation leads to a belief that it surpassed his more careful efforts. He ranked unquestionably in the first class of warriors; nor

* Mr. Burke.

is it doubtful that the system by which, when carried to its full extent, Napoleon's victories were gained, had its origin in the strategy of Frederic,—the plan, namely, of rapidly moving vast masses of troops, and always bringing a superior force to bear upon the point of attack. His administration, whether military or civil, was singularly marked by promptitude and energy. Wherever active exertion was required, or could secure success, he was likely to prevail; and as he was in all things a master of those inferior abilities which constitute what we denominate address, it is not wonderful that he was uniformly fortunate in the cabinets of his neighbours. The encouragements which he lavished on learned men were useful, though not always skilfully bestowed; and in this, as in all the departments of his government, we see him constantly working mischief by working too much. His Academy was no less under command than the best disciplined regiment in the service; and did not refuse to acknowledge his authority upon matters of scientific opinion or of taste in the arts. His own literary acquirements were limited to the *belles lettres* and moral sciences; even of these he was far from being completely master. His practice, as an administrator, is inconsistent with an extensive or sound political knowledge; and his acquaintance with the classics was derived from French translations; he knew very little Latin, and no Greek. To his sprightliness in society, and his love of literary company, so rare in princes, he owes the reputation of a philosopher; and to the success of his intrigues and his arms, the appellation of Great: a title which is less honourable, that mankind have generally agreed to bestow it upon those to whom their gratitude was least of all due.

GUSTAVUS III.

The nephew of Frederic II. was Gustavus III. of Sweden, and he is certainly entitled to rank among the more distinguished men of his age. It was the saying of Frederic, "My nephew is an extraordinary person; he succeeds in all he undertakes;" and considering the difficulties of his position, the adverse circumstances in which some of his enterprises were attempted, his success amply justified the panegyric at the time it was pronounced, and before the military disasters of his reign.

He was born with a great ambition to distinguish, both his country among the nations of Europe and himself among her sovereigns. Inflamed with the recollection of former Swedish monarchs, and impatient of the low position to which the ancient renown of his country had fallen through a succession of feeble princes, he formed the project of relieving the crown from the trammels imposed upon it by an overwhelming aristocracy, as the only means by which the old glories of Sweden could be revived, and the influence of the Gustavuses and the Charleses restored. The king of the country, indeed, when he ascended the throne was its sovereign only in name. He had all the responsibility of the government cast upon him; he had all its weight resting upon his shoulders; he had all the odium of executing the laws to suppress sedition, to levy taxes, to punish offenders. But neither in making those laws, nor in guiding the policy of the state, nor in administering its resources, had he any perceptible influence whatever. The crown was a mere pageant of state, wholly destitute of power, and only supposed to exist because the multitude, accustomed to be governed by kings, required acts of authority to be promulged in the royal name, and because it was convenient to have some quarter upon which the blame of all

that was unpopular in the conduct of the government might rest. The real power of the state was certainly in the hands of the Aristocracy, who ruled, through the medium of the States, an assembly of nominal representatives of the country, in which the order of the nobles alone bore sway. The Senate in fact governed the country. In them was vested almost all the patronage of the state; they could compel meetings of the Diet at any time; they even claimed the command of the army, and issued their orders to the troops without the king's consent.

When Gustavus was abroad on his travels, being then about 22 years of age, his father died; and from Paris, where the intelligence reached him, he addressed a Declaration filled with the most extravagant expressions of devotion to the constitution, zeal for the liberties of his people, and abhorrence of everything tending towards absolute government, or what in Sweden is termed "Sovereignty;" for the Swedes, like the Romans, regarded monarchy, except in name, as equivalent to tyranny. He vowed that "deeming it his chiefest glory to be the first citizen of a free state" he should regard all those "as his worst enemies, who, being traitorous to the country, should upon any pretext whatever seek to introduce unlimited royal authority into Sweden," and he reminded the States of the oath which he had solemnly sworn to the constitution. Those who read this piece were struck with the overdone expressions in which it was couched; and profound observers did not hesitate to draw conclusions wholly unfavourable to the sincerity of the royal author. On his arrival in Sweden, whither he was in little haste to return, he renewed the same vows of fealty to the existing constitution; signed the articles of the Capitulation tendered by the States in the usual form, articles which left him the name of king and the shadow of royal authority; absolved the States and his subjects from their allegiance should he depart from his engagements, and menaced with his "utmost wrath all who should dare to propose a single degree of addition to the present power or splendour of the crown." At his Coronation, which

was postponed to the next year, he volunteered an additional display of gratuitous hypocrisy, and fraud, when, having taken the oaths to the constitution, he exclaimed, "Unhappy the king who wants the tie of oaths to secure himself on the throne, and, unable to reign in the hearts of his people, is forced to rule by legal constraint!"

Thus did this accomplished dissembler contrive, for above a year and a half, to keep up the appearance of a constitutional king, while in all his works and actions he affected the republican, and even overdid the part. At length his preparations being completed, he cast the mask away, excited an insurrection of troops in two distant fortresses to distract the senate's attention, and having gained over the regiments in the capital, secured the persons of the senators, assembled the other Estates in a hall surrounded with soldiery, and against which guns were planted and men stationed with lighted matches, while he dictated a new constitution vesting absolute power in the crown, and annihilating the influence of both the nobility and the representatives of the people. This outrageous act of combined treachery and violence he concluded as he had began with the mockery of oaths, and the most extravagant cant of piety. He swore to the new constitution; he invoked the Divine blessings on it in a hypocritical prayer; and he ended by ordering all present to sing a psalm, of which he gave out the first line and led the air. Certainly so gross an instance of sustained falsehood and fraud, in all its departments, was never either before or since exhibited by any even of the royal hypocrites who have at various times encroached, by stratagem and by perjury, upon the liberties of mankind.

It is fit that the history of this transaction should be set forth in its own hateful colours, because it both was at the time, and has been since, made the subject of great panegyric among the admirers of successful crime. Mankind will never be without oppressors as long as they act against their own best interests by conspiring against those of virtue, and make impostors of statesmen and tyrants of princes by transferring to success the praise that should be reserved for virtue, venerating

fortune rather than prudence, and defrauding the wise and the good of their just applause, or suffering it to be shared with the profligate and the daring. A premium is thus held out for unscrupulous violence and unprincipled fraud, when the failure of the worst and the best designs is alone and alike condemned, and the means by which success is achieved are lost sight of in the false lustre that surrounds it.

But tried by a far lower standard than that of public virtue, the conduct of Gustavus manifestly fails. If nothing could more betray a base disposition than his consummate hypocrisy, so nothing could more show a paltry mind than the practising his fraudulent pretences when they were wholly unnecessary for his purpose. He might have plotted the overthrow of the constitution just as safely and with quite as much chance of success had he accepted the constitution in the ordinary way, and signed the usual Capitulation as a matter of course. No one objected to his title: while his father yet lived he had been acknowledged the next heir; his succession was certain on his father's death; and if anything could have directed suspicion to his hidden designs it was the pains he took, by his extravagant professions of zealous devotion to Liberty, to show that he was plotting against her. He had nothing to do but to plan his operations in secret, and in secret to obtain the support of the four or five regiments by which he effected his purpose. All his vile canting, both in the declaration from Paris and in the speech on swearing to the constitution, was utterly useless; it only showed a petty understanding as well as a corrupt heart.

Truly he was a profligate man in every sense of the word. He delighted in cunning for cunning's sake. He preferred accomplishing his ends by trick, and the more tricky any course was the more dexterous he thought his pursuit of it, and the better he liked it. His abilities were unquestionable, but they were on a paltry scale; his resolution was undoubted, but he was placed in circumstances which enabled him to avoid running any great risks; for nothing can be more unwieldy than

a senate of sixty or seventy persons as directing a military force; and the mob was for him and against them. That he showed great coolness through the whole affair is not denied. He quietly effected the Revolution on the 21st of August, and retired to a country seat twenty miles from Stockholm, Ekolsund, afterwards the property of a Scotch gentleman, named Seton, whom he ennobled. We have seen there a line or two written by him on the window-shutter, with the above date, and purporting that, "On this day, he had come there after the Revolution." When the Supreme power was lodged in his own hands, although he maintained it without even a struggle, and afterwards still further extended it by a second breach of the constitution (which in 1772 he had so solemnly sworn to maintain, as he had the one which he then overthrew), yet there was nothing enlarged or successful in his administration of public affairs, nothing in his policy which showed an enlightened or well-informed any more than a liberal mind. Supporting an East India Company, and prohibiting the use of coffee under severe penalties to encourage their trade in tea, or prohibiting French brandy to protect the distillation of a very bad spirit from corn, were the greatest reach of his genius for economical improvements; while, by his military expenditure and his fraudulent tampering first with the coin and afterwards with the paper currency, which he issued in excess, he so reduced the standard, that soon after his death it was at a discount of nearly 50 per cent. below par. The bank paper kept its value; but with this he managed to interfere, and in a manner so scandalous that the history of royal profligacy presents no second example of anything so mean and base. An extensive forgery was committed in Hamburgh or Altona upon the Stockholm Bank by parties whom he employed and then gave up. The bank having detected it in time was saved from ruin, though impoverished; and the agents in the infamous plot reaped the usual reward of those who suffer themselves to be made the instruments in the villanies of princes; they were punished because their

principal was beyond the reach of the law, and they wandered abroad exiles for the rest of their days.

In his military capacity he showed talents of considerable extent, though, as in other respects, not of the first order. He was active, enterprising, prodigal of his person: but so little measuring his designs by his means, that he obtained for himself the reputation of being a restless prince rather than the fame of a considerable warrior; and so little equal to form great and happy and well-considered combinations, that he never went beyond daring and brilliant failures. The absolute influence of Russia under the Aristocratic government having been put an end to by the Revolution, ever after 1772 Catherine was plotting to regain her ascendant, or to obtain by force a still more undisputed sway over Swedish affairs. To all her intrigues Gustavus was alive, and often succeeded in counteracting them; to all her insidious proposals he was deaf, seeing through their real object, as when she would have inveighed him into a partition of Denmark, Norway, to become Russian, and Jutland with the islands, Swedish, he made answer that "She should not put her arm around his neck to strangle him." Indeed there can be little doubt that she only wished to draw him into a snare by obtaining his consent, that she might betray him to Denmark, and join with her in destroying him. When, therefore, the terms on which these two profligate Sovereigns were with each other had become as unfriendly as possible, and he found Russia engaged on the side of Turkey in a very different warfare, he seized the opportunity of attacking her, and sailed with a fleet up the gulf of Finland, so as to threaten Petersburgh by his approach. His first operations were successful, though on a small scale, and in a degree far more decisive. A battle was then fought in circumstances so adverse to any such operation, that it seemed as much contrary to nature in a physical as in a moral view; for the channel was narrow, studded with islands, broken with rocks at every step, and defying all nautical skill to steer through unless with favouring weather, and without any other

occupation than that of seamanship. Yet here did the hostile fleets engage for many hours, with immense slaughter on both sides, and so balanced a result that each claimed the victory. The Russians, however, being greatly superior in numbers, kept the sea afterwards, and the Swedes retreated. An opposition in the senate interposed new obstacles to Gustavus's projects, and he treated this with his wonted vigour. Appealing for support to the other orders, and then surrounding that refractory and disaffected body with troops on whose fidelity he could rely, he arrested five-and-thirty of them, and abolished the senate by a sudden change of its own constitution, and a new violation of his most solemn engagements. His next campaign was thus freed from political embarrassment, but it was throughout disastrous. Defeated by sea, on shore he was still more unfortunate; his army, officers as well as men, refused to obey him; and he was reduced to the deplorable expedient, easily suggested by the rooted falseness of his nature, of amusing the people with fictitious accounts of his proceedings; but his fictions were so clumsy that their self-contradictions betrayed their origin, and the honest Prince of Nassau was induced to complain formally of such a proceeding, bluntly and ineffectually reminding the monarch that such gross and apparent falsehoods were wholly unworthy a man who was always desirous of playing the warrior and the hero.

In these disastrous scenes, from the consequences of which Sweden did not recover for many years, and the effects of which long survived their author, it is admitted on all hands that his abilities were advantageously shown, but above all, that his courage was uniformly displayed in an eminent degree. It is doubtful if any capacity could have made up for the vast disparity of strength between the two parties who were thus matched in such unequal combat; but he often succeeded where an ordinary man would never have ventured; and although he could not be said to display first-rate talents for war, he yet had no reason to be ashamed of the part he played in its operations.

In private life his profligacy was of the grossest de-

scription; and with the same preposterous folly which made him prefer the most crooked paths in order to show his cunning, he thought that his grand object of civilizing his dominions could be accomplished by patronizing the introduction of foreign vices from other climates among the hardy and sober children of the North. He was, however, a patron of the fine arts; greatly improved the architecture of his capital; established an opera on a respectable scale; and encouraged some excellent artists, of whom Sergel, the sculptor, was the most eminent.

His personal accomplishments were considerable; his information was much above that of ordinary princes; and though he never attempted so much as his uncle of Prussia, nor possessed equally the superficial kind of learning which that prince prided himself upon, he certainly wrote a great deal better, or rather less badly, and probably was not really his inferior in a literary point of view. His manners and address were extremely engaging, and he was greatly above the folly of standing on the dignity of his station, as his liberal literary uncle, Frederic, always did; who, willing enough to pass for a wit among kings, was always ready enough to be a king among wits, so that when the wit was beaten in fair argument, he might call in the king to his assistance. Gustavus, though a far inferior person in other respects, was greatly above such mean vanity as this; ever showed sufficient confidence in his own resources to meet his company upon equal terms; and having once begun the discussion by admitting them to the same footing with himself, scorned to change his ground or his character, and substitute authority for argument or for repartee. It was the observation of a man well versed in courts, and who had seen much of the princes of his time,* that Gustavus III. was almost the only one of them who would have been reckoned a clever man in society had he been born a subject.

The same spirit which he showed in the field, and in his political measures, he displayed equally in the va-

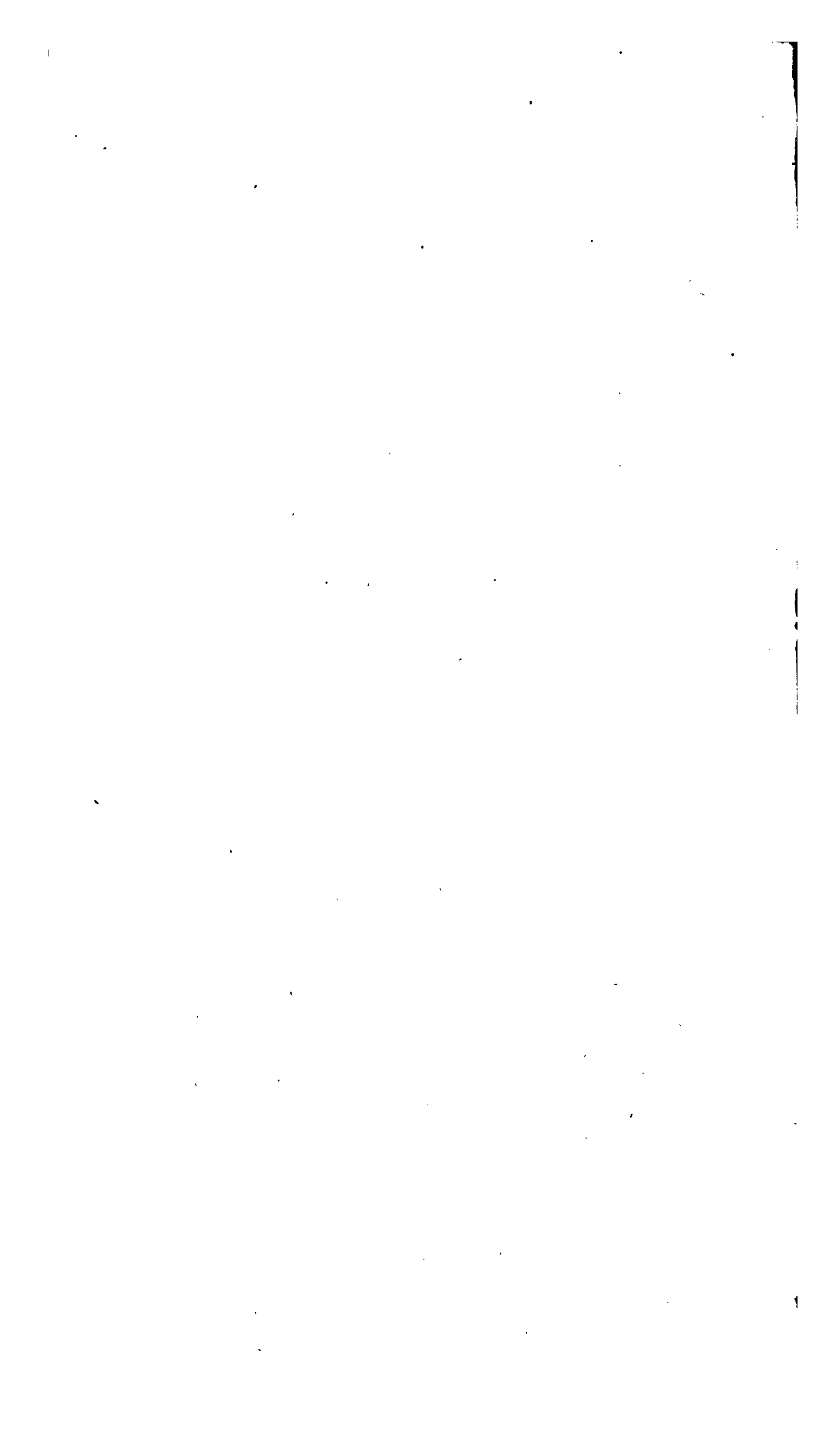
* Sir Robert Liston.

rious attempts made upon his life. The arsenals and museums of Stockholm have several deadly instruments preserved in them, which were aimed at his person: and in no instance did he ever lose his presence of mind, or let the attempt be known, which by some extraordinary accident had failed. At last he fell by an assassin's hand. For some mysterious reason, apparently unconnected with political matters, an officer named Ankerstroem, not a noble or connected with nobility, shot him in the back at a masquerade. The ground of quarrel apparently was personal; different accounts, some more discreditable to the monarch than others, are given of it; but nothing has been ascertained on sufficent evidence; and these are subjects upon which no public end is served by collecting or preserving conjectures. To dwell upon them rather degrades history into gossiping or tale-bearing, and neither explains men's motives, nor helps us to weigh more accurately the merits of their conduct any more than to ascertain its springs.

The story of the fortunes of this prince presents no unimportant lessons to statesmen of the relative value of those gifts which they are wont most to prize, and the talents which they are fondest of cultivating. A useful moral may also be drawn from the tale of so many fine endowments being thrown away, and failing to earn enduring renown, merely because they were unconnected with good principles, and unaccompanied by right feelings. The qualities which he possessed, or improved, or acquired, were the most calculated to strike the vulgar, and to gain the applause of the unreflecting multitude. Brave, determined, gifted as well with political courage as with personal valour, quick of apprehension, capable of application, patient of fatigue, well informed on general subjects, elegant, lively, and agreeable in society, affable, relying on his merits in conversation, and overbearing with his rank none that approached him—who so well fitted to win all hearts, if common popularity were his object, or to gain lasting fame if he had chosen to build upon such foundations a superstructure of glorious deeds? But not con-

tent with being prudent and politic, he must affect the power of being able to deceive all mankind; wise only by halves, he must mistake cunning for sagacity; perverted in his taste by vanity, he must prefer outwitting men by trickery to overcoming them by solid reason or by fair designs; preposterously thinking that the greater the treachery the deeper the policy, he must overlay all his schemes with superfluous hypocrisy and dissimulation. Even his courage availed him little; because looking only to the outside of things, and provident only for the first step, he never profoundly formed his plans, nor ever thought of suiting his measures to his means. Thus in war he left the reputation only of failure and defeat; nor did the fame which he acquired by his successful political movements long outlive him, when men saw to how little account he was capable of turning the power which he had been fortunate enough to obtain by his bold and managing spirit. For many years men observing the contrast which he presented to other princes in his personal demeanour, and dazzled with the success of his political enterprise, lavished their admiration upon him with little stint, and less reflection; nor would they, had his dominions been more extensive, and his actions performed on a less confined theatre, have hesitated in bestowing upon him the title of "Great," with which they are wont to reward their worst enemies for their worst misdeeds, and to seduce sovereigns into the paths of tyranny and war. But he outlived the fame which he had early acquired. To his victories over the aristocracy at home succeeded his defeats by the enemy abroad. It was discovered that a prince may be more clever and accomplished than others, without being more useful to his people, or more capable of performing great actions; and the wide difference between genius and ability was never more marked than in him. By degrees the eyes even of his contemporaries were opened to the truth; and then the vile arts of treachery, in which it was his unnatural pride to excel, became as hateful to men of sound principles as his preposterous relish for such bad distinction was disgustful to men of correct taste and right feelings. Of all his reputation, at one

time sufficiently brilliant, not any vestige now remains conspicuous enough to tempt others into his crooked paths; and the recollections associated with his story, while they bring contempt upon his name, are only fitted to warn men against the shame that attends lost opportunities and prostituted talents.



THE EMPEROR JOSEPH.

A GREAT contrast in every respect to Gustavus III. was presented by another Prince who flourished in the same age, Joseph II. In almost all qualities, both of the understanding and the heart, he differed widely from his contemporary of the North. With abilities less shining though more solid, and which he had cultivated more diligently; with far more information acquired somewhat after the laborious German fashion; with so little love for trick or value for his own address, that he rather plumed himself on being a stranger to those arts, and on being defective in the ordinary provision of cunning which the deceitful atmosphere of courts renders almost necessary as a protection against circumvention; with ambition to excel but not confined to love of military glory; with no particular wish to exalt his own authority, nor any disposition to acquire fame by extending the happiness of his peoplo—although presenting to the vulgar gaze a less striking object than Gustavus, he was in all important particulars a far more considerable person, and wanted but little from nature, though certainly much from fortune, to have left behind him a great and lasting reputation. That which he did want was, however, sufficient to destroy all chance of realizing an eminent station among the lights of the world: for his judgment was defective; he was more restless than persevering; and though not at all wanting in powers of labour, yet he often thought of royal roads to his object, and leaving those steep and circuitous routes which nature has formed along the ascents, would fall into what has been termed by Lord Bacon, the paradox of power—desiring to attain the end without submitting to use the means. Success in such circumstances was hopeless; and accident contributed largely to multiply and exaggerate his failures, insomuch that the unhappy monarch on his death-bed

exclaimed in the anguish of his spirit, that his epitaph should be—"Here lies Joseph who was unsuccessful in all his undertakings." Men, looking to the event, rated him very far below his real value, and gave him credit for none of the abilities and few of the virtues which he really possessed. Nothing can be more unjust, more foolish in itself or more mischievous in its consequences, than the almost universal determination of the world to reckon nothing in a prince of any value but brilliant talents, and to account worth of little avail in that station in which it is of the most incalculable importance. Nay, let a royal life be ever so much disfigured with crime, if it have nothing mean, that is, if its vices be all on a great scale, and especially if it be covered with military successes, little of the reprobation due to its demerits will be expressed, as if the greatest public enormities, the excesses of ambition, effected a composition for the worst of private faults. Even our James I. is the object of contempt not so much for the vile life he led as for his want of spirit and deficiency in warlike accomplishments; and, if the only one of his failings which was beneficial to his subjects had not existed in his character, his name would have descended to us with general respect among the Harrys and the Edwards of an earlier age.

It was in some degree unfortunate for the fame of Joseph that he came after so able and so celebrated a personage as his mother, Maria Theresa. But this circumstance also proved injurious to his education: for the Empress Queen was resolved that her son, even when clothed by the Election of the Germanic Diet with the Imperial title, should exercise none of its prerogatives during her life; and long after he had arrived at man's estate, he was held in a kind of tutelage by that bold and politic princess. Having therefore finished his studies, and perceiving that at home he was destined to remain a mere cipher while she ruled, he went abroad, and travelled into those dominions in Italy nominally his own, but where he had no more concern with the government than the meanest of his subjects; and from thence he visited the rest of the

Italian states. An eager, but an indiscriminate thirst of knowledge distinguished him wherever he went; there was no subject which he would not master, no kind of information which he would not amass; nor were any details too minute for him to collect. Nothing can be more praiseworthy than a sovereign thus acquainting himself thoroughly with the concerns of the people over whom he is called to rule; and the undistinguishing ardour of his studies can lead to little other harm than the losing time, or preventing the acquisition of important matters by distracting the attention to trifles. But his activity was as indiscriminate as his inquiries, and he both did some harm and exposed himself to much ridicule by the conduct which it prompted. He must needs visit the convents, and inspect the work of the nuns; nor rest satisfied until he imposed on those whose needle moved less quickly than suited his notions of female industry, the task of making shirts for the soldiery. So his ambition was equally undistinguishing and unreflecting; nor did he consider that the things which it led him to imitate might well be void of all merit in him, though highly important in those whose example he was following to the letter regardless of the spirit. Thus, because the Emperor of China encourages agriculture by driving, at some solemn festival, a plough with the hands that holds at other times the celestial sceptre, the Emperor of Germany must needs plough a ridge in the Milanese, where of course a monument was erected to perpetuate this act of princely folly.

But of all his admirations, that which he entertained for the great enemy of his house, his mother, and his crown, was the most preposterous. During the Seven Years' War, which threatened the existence of all three, he would fain have served a campaign under Frederic II.; and although he might probably have had the decency to station himself on the northern frontier where Russia was the enemy, yet no one can wonder at the Empress Queen prohibiting her son from taking the recreation of high treason to amuse his leisure hours, and occupying his youth and exposing his person in shaking the throne which he was one day to fill. At length, however, the

day arrived which he had so long eagerly panted for, when he was to become personally acquainted with the idol of his devotion. His inflexible parent had, in 1766, prevented them from meeting at Torgau; but three years after they had an interview of some days at Neiss in Silesia, the important province which Frederic had wrested from the Austrian crown. The veteran monarch has well conveyed an idea of his admirer in one of his historical works, which indeed contains very few sketches of equal merit:—"Il affectoit une franchise qui lui sembloit naturelle; son caractere aimable marquoit de la gaieté jointé à la vivacite; mais avec le désir d'apprendre, il n'avoit pas la patience de s'instruire." And certainly this impatience of the means, proportioned to an eagerness for the end, was the distinguishing feature of his whole character and conduct through life, from the most important to the most trivial of his various pursuits.

Although Frederic had a perfect right to look down upon Joseph in this view as well as in many others, and although there can be no sort of comparison between the two men in general, yet is it equally certain that in one most important particular a close resemblance may be traced between them, and the same defect may be found marring the projects of both. Their internal administration was marked with the same intermeddling and controlling spirit, than which a more mischievous character cannot belong to any system of rule. It is indeed an error into which all sovereigns and all ministers are very apt to fall, when they avoid the opposite, perhaps safer, extreme of indifference to their duties. Nor was he the more likely to steer a middle course, whose power had no limits; whose ideas of government were taken from the mechanical discipline of an army; and whose abilities so far exceeded the ordinary lot of royal understandings, that he seemed to have some grounds for thinking himself capable of everything, while he despised the talents of everybody else. Yet must it be allowed, that if all other proofs were wanting, this one undoubted imperfection in Frederic's nature is a sufficient ground for ranking him among inferior

minds, and for denying him those higher qualities of the understanding which render such faculties beneficial, as he unquestionably possessed. A truly great genius will be the first to prescribe limits for its own exertions; to discover the sphere within which its powers must be concentrated in order to work, beyond which their diffusion can only uselessly dazzle. But this was a knowledge and a self-command, that Frederic never attained. Though the ignorance and weakness which he displayed, in the excessive government of his kingdom, were thrown into the shade by his military glory, or partially covered by his cleverness and activity, they require only to be viewed apart, in order to excite as much ridicule as was ever bestowed upon the Emperor Joseph, whose system of administration indeed greatly resembled his neighbour's, unless that he had more leisure to show his good intentions by his blunders, and was guided by better principles in the prosecution of his never-ending schemes. Like him, the Prussian ruler conceived that it was his duty to be eternally at work; to take every concern in his dominions upon his own shoulders; seldom to think men's interest safe when committed to themselves, much less to delegate to his ministers any portion of the superintending power, which must yet be everywhere present and constantly on the watch. Both of these princes knew enough of detail to give them a relish for affairs; but they were always wasting their exemplary activity in marring the concerns which belonged not to their department; and extending their knowledge of other people's trades, instead of forming an acquaintance with their own. While other monarchs were making a business of pleasure, they made a pleasure of business; but, utterly ignorant how much of their professional duties resolved into a wise choice of agents, with all their industry and wit, they were only mismanging a part of the work, and leaving the rest undone; so that it may fairly be questioned whether their dominions would not have gained by the exchange, had their lives been squandered in the seraglio, and their affairs entrusted to cabinets of more quiet persons with more ordinary understandings.

But although these two eminent men were equally fond of planning and regulating, as they indulged their propensity in different circumstances, so their schemes were not pursued in the same manner, and have certainly been attended with different results. Joseph was a legislator and a projector. From the restlessness of his spirit, and the want of pressing affairs to employ his portion of talent, his measures were often rather busy and needless, than seriously hurtful; and as the conception of a plan resulted from his activity and idleness, he was still vacant and restless after the steps had been taken for its execution, and generally strangled it by his impatience to witness the fruits of his wisdom; like the child who plants a bean, and plucks it up when it has scarcely sprouted, to see how it is growing. Thus it happened, that many of his innovations were done away by himself, while others had no tendency to operate any change. Those which were opposed, he only pushed to a certain length, and then knew how to yield after mischief had been done by the struggle; but few of them survived his own day; chiefly such as anticipated, by a slight advance, the natural course of events. Frederic, on the other hand, was not placed in easy circumstances; he was active from necessity, as much as from vanity; he was an adventurer, whose projects must be turned to some account; not an idle amateur, who can amuse himself by forming a new scheme after the others have failed. Although then, like Joseph, he could afford his designs little time to ripen, yet he contrived to force something out of them by new applications of power; thus bringing to a premature conclusion operations in their own nature violent and untimely. Hence his necessities, like his rival's idle impatience, allowed his plans no chance of coming to perfection; but while Joseph destroyed the scheme of yesterday to make a new one, Frederick carried it forcibly into an imperfect execution before it was well laid. Add to this, that the power of the latter being more absolute, and of a description the best adapted for enforcing detailed commands, he was better enabled to carry through his regulating and interfering plans against whatever opposition they might

encounter, while his superior firmness of character, and his freedom from the various checks which principle or feeling imposed upon the Austrian monarch, precluded all escape from the rigour of his administration by any other than fraudulent means. Thus, the consequences of his too much governing, of his miserable views in finance, and of his constant errors in the principles of commercial legislation, are to be traced at this day through the various departments of the Prussian states. Nor can it be asserted in the present instance, that the powers of individual interest have sufficed to produce their natural effects upon human industry in spite of the shackles by which it has been fettered and cramped.

The intercourse between these two sovereigns which took place at Neiss, in 1769, was not their only meeting; they had another the year after at Neustadt; and here, if ever, the remark of Voltaire proved correct, "that the meetings of Sovereigns are perilous to their subjects;" for here was arranged that execrable crime against the rights of men and of nations, which has covered the memory of its perpetrators with incomparably less infamy than they deserved, the Partition of Poland. Although Joseph's mother was still alive and suffered him to share none of her authority, yet this negotiation, in which he undeniably was engaged, deprives him of all pretext for withdrawing from his portion of the disgrace which so justly covers the parties to that foul transaction.

It is certain, however, and it is a melancholy truth, that this abominable enterprise is the only one of all the Emperor's undertakings that ever succeeded. His less guilty attempt in Belgium, his harmless changes in Austria, his projects of useful reform in Italy, all failed and failed signally, for the most part through the careless and unreflecting manner in which he formed his plans, and his want of patience in allowing time for their execution. His absurd fancy of being crowned King of Hungary at Vienna, instead of Presburg, and transporting the regalia out of the country, without the possibility of effecting any good purpose, offended the national pride of the Hungarians,

and roused their suspicions of further designs against their rights to such a pitch, that for the rest of his reign he had to encounter the opposition of those upon whose protection his mother had thrown herself in her extremity, and who had sworn "To die for their King Maria Theresa." His Flemish reforms, and indeed his attempts upon the liberties of the Flemings, ended in exciting an open rebellion, which convulsed the Netherlands at the time of his death. In a far nobler object his steadiness failed as usual, and his ill-digested and rash innovation rather confirmed than extirpated the evil he wished to destroy. He designed to suppress the Monasteries, to prevent Appeals to Rome, and to retain the power of Ordination and deprivation within the country. But he proceeded in so inconsiderate a manner as to raise universal alarm among all classes of the Clergy, and even to make the Pope undertake a journey from Rome with the view of turning him aside from his projects, by showing their dangerous consequences. A courteous reception was all the Sovereign Pontiff received; and after his return to Italy, the Emperor rashly abolished the Diocesan Seminaries, reserving only five or six for the whole of his vast dominions; new modelled the limits of the dioceses, and altered the whole law of marriage, granting, for the first time in a Catholic country, the liberty of divorce. He removed at the same time the images from the churches, to show that he could, in trifling as well as graver matters, pursue the course of premature innovation, and that he was ignorant of the great rule of practical wisdom in government, which forbids us to hurt strong and general feelings where no adequate purpose is to be served, how trifling or absurd soever the subject matter may be to which these feelings relate. The removal of images however was far from the most trifling of the details into which he thrust his improving hand. He wearied out the clergy as well as their flocks with innumerable regulations touching fasts, processions, ceremonies of the Church, everything, as has been well observed, with which the civil power has the least right to meddle, and, it might be added, everything the most beneath a Sovereign's regard; so that Frederic

used not unhappily to speak of him as his "brother the Sexton" (*mon frère le Sacristain*). Every one knows how such freaks of power, the growth of a little mind, torment and irritate their objects even more than they lower the reputation and weaken the authority of their authors.

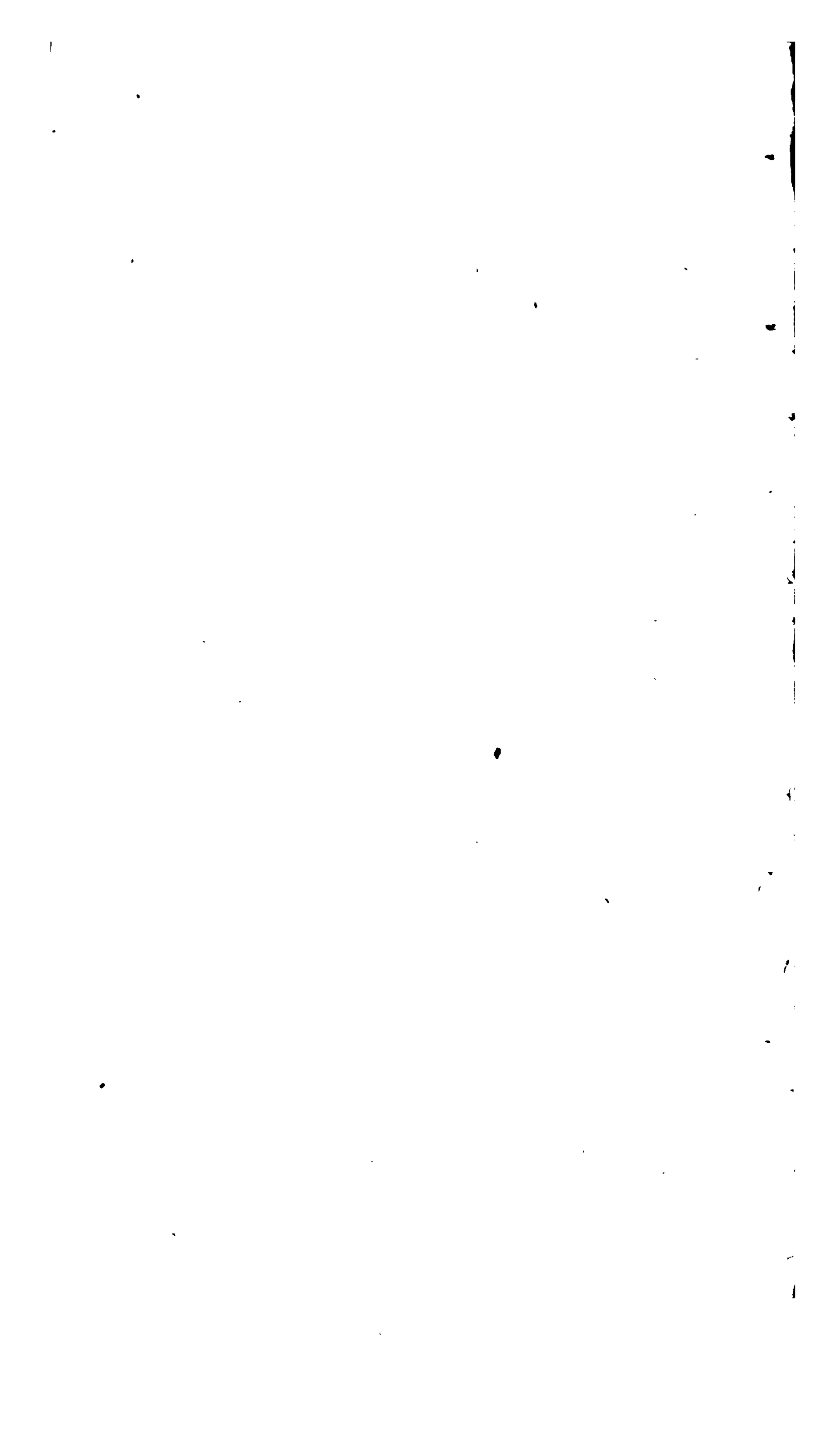
Having formerly, with a restlessness so foolish as in his position to be almost criminal, chosen the moment of the whole of his people being flung into consternation by his measures, as the fittest opportunity for going abroad upon a tour through France, where he passed some months in envying all he saw, and being mortified by its superiority to his own possessions, novelty being no cause of this journey, for he had been all over that fine country for years before—so now, after having refused the Pope's request, and proceeded still more rapidly in his ecclesiastical changes since the pontifical visit, he chose to return it immediately after he had given this offence; and he passed his time at Rome in vainly endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of Spain with his project for entirely throwing off all allegiance to the Holy See. A few years after, this wandering Emperor repaired to Russia, and accompanied Catherine on her progress through the southern parts of her empire. Here he met with a sovereign who resembled him in one point and no more; she was devoured by the same restless passion for celebrity, and in her domestic administration undertook everything to finish nothing, how effectively soever she might accomplish the worser objects of her criminal ambition abroad. A witty remark of his connected with this weakness is recorded, and proves sufficiently that he could mark in another what he was unable to correct in himself. She had laid the first stone of a city, to be called by her name, and she requested him to lay the second. "I have begun and finished," said he, "a great work with the Empress. She laid the first stone of a city and I laid the last, all in one day."

His excessive admiration of Frederic, combined with his thirst of military glory, in the war of the Bavarian succession in 1778, had the effect of neutralising each

other. He preferred corresponding to fighting with his adversary, who called it a campaign of the pen. Under the mediation of France peace was speedily restored, after an active and vigorous interchange of letters for some months, and with no other result. But the war with the Turks, into which Catherine inveigled him, was of a very different character. With them no written compositions could produce any effects; and a series of disasters ensued, which ended in the enemy menacing Vienna itself, after overrunning all Lower Hungary. It was in vain that he endeavoured to rally his defeated troops, or win back victory to his standard by the most indiscriminate severity; cashiering officers by the platoon, and shooting men by the regiment, until at length old Marshal Laudohn came forth from his retirement, and the men, animated by the sight of their ancient chief, repulsed the enemy, resumed the offensive, and forced Belgrade to capitulate without a siege. At this critical moment, and ere yet he could taste the pleasure, to him so novel, of success, death closed his eyes upon the ruin of his affairs in Belgium, their inextricable embarrassment at home, the death of a sister-in-law (first wife of Leopold), to whom he was tenderly attached, and the unwonted, perhaps unexpected, gleam of prosperity in the Turkish campaign. He died in the flower of his age, and almost at the summit of the confusion created by his restless folly, a sad instance how much mischief a prince may do to others, and how great vexation inflict upon himself, by attempting in mediocrity of resources things which only a great capacity can hope to execute.

The volume which records the transactions of statesmen, often suggests the remark that the success of mediocrity, both in public and in private life, affords a valuable lesson to the world, a lesson the more extensively useful, because the example is calculated to operate upon a far more enlarged scale than the feats of rare endowments. In private individuals, moderate talents, however misused by disproportioned ambition, can produce little harm, except in exposing the folly and presumption of their possessors. But in princes moderate talents, unaccompanied with discretion and modesty,

are calculated to spread the greatest misery over whole nations. The pursuit of renown, when confined to maladministration at home, is extremely mischievous; leading to restless love of change for change's sake, attempts to acquire celebrity by undertakings which are above the reach of him who makes them, and which involve the community in the consequences of their failure. But the fear always is, that this restless temper, unsustained by adequate capacity, may lead to indulging in the Great Sport of Kings, and that wars, even when successful most hurtful to the state, will be waged, without any fair chance of avoiding discomfiture and disgrace. Hence a greater curse can hardly light upon any people than to be governed by a prince in whom disproportioned ambition, or preposterous vanity, is only supported by the moderate talents which, united to sound principles, and under the control of a modest nature, might constitute their safety and their happiness. For it is altogether undeniable that, considering the common failings of princes, the necessary defects of their education, the inevitable tendency of their station to engender habits of self-indulgence, and the proneness which they all feel, when gifted with a superior capacity, to seek dominion or fame by martial deeds, there is far more safety in nations being ruled by sovereigns of humble talents, if these are only accompanied with an ambition proportionably moderate.



THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

THE two male conspirators against the liberties of mankind, the rights of nations, the peace of the world, have now been painted, but in colours far more subdued than the natural hues of their crimes. It remains that the most profligate of the three should be portrayed, and she a woman!—but a woman in whom the lust of power united with the more vulgar profligacy of our kind, had effaced all traces of the softer nature that marks the sex, and left an image of commanding talents and prodigious firmness of soul, the capacities which constitute a great character, blended with unrelenting fierceness of disposition, unscrupulous proneness to fraud, unrestrained indulgence of the passions, all the weakness and all the wickedness which can debase the worst of the human race.

The Princess Sophia of Anhalt Zerbst, one of the smallest of the petty principalities in which Northern Germany abounds, was married to Peter III., nephew and heir-presumptive to the Russian crown, and she took the name of Catherine, according to the custom of that barbarous nation. The profligacy of Elizabeth, then on the throne of the Czars, was little repugnant to the crapulous life which her future successor led, or to his consort following their joint example. The young bride, accordingly, soon fell into the debauched habits of the court, and she improved upon them; for having more than once changed the accomplices of her adulterous indulgences, almost as swiftly as Elizabeth did, she had her husband murdered by her paramour, that is, the person for the time holding the office of paramour; and having gained over the guard and the mob of Petersburgh, she usurped the crown to which she could pretend no earthly title. To refute the reports that were current and to satisfy all inquiries as to the cause of Peter's death, she ordered his body to be exposed to

public view, and stationed guards to prevent any one from approaching near enough to see the livid hue which the process of strangling had spread over his features.

The reign thus happily begun, was continued in the constant practice of debauchery and the occasional commission of convenient murder. Lover after lover was admitted to the embraces of the Messalina of the North, until soldiers of the guards were employed in fatiguing an appetite which could not be satiated. Sometimes the favourite of the day would be raised to the confidence and the influence of prime minister; but after a while he ceased to please as the paramour, though he retained his ministerial functions. One of the princes of the blood having been pitched on by a party to be their leader, was thrown into prison; and when the zeal of that party put forward pretences to the throne on his behalf, the imperial Jezebel had him murdered in his dungeon as the shortest way of terminating all controversy on his account, and all uneasiness. The mediocrity of her son Paul's talents gave her no umbrage, especially joined to the eccentricity of his nature, and his life was spared. Had he given his tigress mother a moment's alarm, he would speedily have followed his unhappy father to the regions where profligacy and parricide are unknown.

Although Catherine was thus abandoned in all her indulgences and unscrupulous in choosing the means of gratifying her ambition especially, yet did she not give herself up to either the one kind of vice or the other, either to cruelty or to lust, with the weakness which in little minds lends those abominable propensities an entire and undivided control. Her lovers never were her rulers; her licentiousness interfered not with her public conduct; her cruelties were not numerous and wanton; not the result of caprice or the occupation of a wicked and malignant nature, but the expedients, the unjustifiable, the detestable expedients, to which she had recourse when a great end was to be attained. The historian who would fully record the life of the Czarina, must deform his page with profligacy and with crimes

that resemble the disgusting annals of the Cæsars; but the blot would be occasional only, and the darkness confined to a few pages, instead of blackening the whole volume, as it does that of Tacitus or Suetonius: for she had far too great a mind to be enslaved by her passions, or merely mischievous in her feelings, although the gusts of one carried her away, and what of the other was amiable, had far too little force to resist the thirst of dominion, which, with the love of indulgence, formed the governing motive of her conduct.

Her capacity was of an exalted order. Her judgment was clear and sure; her apprehension extraordinarily quick; her sagacity penetrating; her providence and circumspection comprehensive. To fear, hesitation, vacillation, she was an utter stranger; and the adoption of a design was with her its instant execution. But her plan differed widely from those of her companion Joseph II., or even of her neighbour Gustavus III. They resembled far more those of her long-headed accomplice of Prussia. They were deeply laid in general, and for the most part well digested; formed as to their object with no regard to principle, but only to her aggrandisement and glory; framed as to their execution, with no regard to the rights or mercy for the sufferings of her fellow-creatures. Over their execution the same dauntless, reckless, heartless feelings presided; nor was she ever to be turned from her purpose by difficulties and perils, or abated in her desires of success by languor and delay, or quelled in her course by the least remnant of the humane feelings that mark the softer sex, extinct in her bold, masculine, and flinty bosom.

In one material particular, and in the only one, she seemed to betray her original womanhood, and ceased to pursue the substance after she had gone far enough to gratify her vanity with the shadow of outward appearances, and to tickle her ears with popular applause. Her military operations on the side of the east; her attempts at encroachment upon Turkey, whether by skilful negotiation with the Greek chiefs, or warlike movements

almost decidedly successful against Constantinople;* her measures in concert with Denmark against Sweden, and which only the interposition of England at Copenhagen in 1788,† prevented from putting Finland in her possession; her share in the execrable Partition of Poland from the beginning of that crime down to its consummation in 1794—all these schemes of her vigorous and daring policy, formed a strange contrast with those ebullitions of childish vanity, which laid the foundation of cities in a desert, never to be finished nor even built above the corner-stone; or assembled upon her route through the wastes of her empire thousands of half-naked savages and clothed them with dresses to be transported in the night and serve the next day's show, while she was making a progress through her barren, unpeopled domains, or made the shells of houses be raised one week along the road where she was to pass, destined the week after to tumble in premature but inevitable ruins; or collected groups of peasants where none could subsist, and had the same groups carried on in the night to greet her next day with another false semblance of an impossible population in another waste. Nor was there much more reality in her councils of lawgivers to prepare a Code for her vast empire, and her instructions, supposed to be written by herself, for guiding their deliberations and assisting their labours. But then she had resolved to be the Semiramis of the North; she must both be the Conqueror of Empires, the Founder of Cities, and the Giver of Laws. But as it was incomparably more easy for an absolute sovereign at the head of forty millions of slave subjects, with a vast impregnable, almost unapproachable dominion, if ruled by no principles, to subdue other countries, than to improve her own, and to extend the numbers of her vassals, than to increase their happiness or their civilization, she failed in all the more harmless, or bene-

* Had her admirals pushed their advantages at Tchesme, the Porte was laid prostrate at her feet.

† Our ambassador threatened to bombard Copenhagen with an English fleet, unless the Danes instantly raised the siege of Gottenburgh.

ficent parts of her schemes, while she unhappily succeeded in many of her warlike and unprincipled projects; and she easily rested satisfied with the name of civil wisdom, and mere outward semblance of plans for internal improvement, while she enjoyed the sad reality of territorial aggrandisement through cruelty and violence. The court she paid to men of letters obtained a prompt repayment in flattery; and they lavished upon her never-ending, never-executed plans of administration the praises to which a persevering and successful execution of them would alone have given her a title. Pleased, satisfied with these sounds, she thought no more of the matter, and her name has come down to our times, though close adjoining her own, stript of every title to respect for excellence in any one department of civil wisdom, while her unprincipled policy in foreign affairs has survived her and still afflicts mankind.

A woman of her commanding talents, however, had other holds over the favour of literary men than the patronage which her station enabled her to dispense. Beside maintaining a kind of literary envoy at Paris in the person of Grimm, she invited Diderot to St. Petersburgh, and purchased D'Alembert's library; patronized the illustrious Euler, and gratified others of less fame by admitting them to the familiar society of a great monarch: but she also had abilities and information enough to relish their conversation, and to bear her part in it upon nearly equal terms. She had the manly sense, too, so far superior to the demeanour of Frederic and the other spoilt children of royal nurseries, that no breach of etiquette, no unbecoming familiarity of her lettered guests ever offended her pride, or roused her official dignity for an instant. Diderot used to go so far in the heat of argument as to slap her on the shoulder or knee with the "*emportement*" of a French "*savant*," and he only excited a smile in the well-natured and truly superior person whose rank and even sex he had for the moment forgotten. Her writings, too, are by no means despicable; but the difficulty of ascertaining that any work published by an Empress-regnant proceeds from

her own pen deprives criticism of all interest as connected with her literary reputation. The most important of her books, indeed, her Instruction to the Commission for composing a Code of Laws, published in 1770, makes little or no pretension to originality, as whatever it has of value is closely copied from the work of Beccaria. The great variety of her subjects is calculated to augment our suspicions that she made books as she made war, by deputy—by orders from head-quarters. Legislation, history, travels, criticism, dramatic pieces of various kinds, political and moral romances—all pass under her name as the occupation of her leisure hours and the fruits of her prolific pen.

It would be unjust, however, to deny that science owes her important obligations. Her patronage of the Academy of Petersburgh was unremitting, and it was unaccompanied by undue interference, the great drawback on all public patronage of letters or literary men, which so often more than balances the benefits it is calculated to bestow. Flourishing under her auspices, it gave to the world some of the most valuable of Euler's profound and original researches. The journeys of Pallas and Gmelin were directed and supported by her, and they explored the hitherto unknown regions of the Caucasus, ascertained their resources, and described their productions. Despatched by her orders, Billings explored the Eastern, and Blumager the Northern Ocean. Nor were some beginnings wanted under her reign to establish schools for teaching the more elementary branches of knowledge to her untutored people.*

Besides these worthy and useful works she made some little improvements upon the judicial and financial administration of her empire, and corrected a very few of the more flagrant abuses, the produce of a darker age, which even in Russia could hardly stand their ground amidst the light of the eighteenth century. But the fragments of her reforming or improving schemes which

* The attention paid to education at the present day in Russia is truly praiseworthy; and might make nations ashamed that pretend to far greater civility and refinement.

alone have remained behind her, bear the most inconsiderable proportion to the bulk of the designs themselves; and of all the towns she began to build, the canals she planned, the colonies she planted, the manufactories she established, the legislation she chalked out, the thousand-and-one institutions of charity, of learning, of industry, she founded, the very names have perished, and the situations been buried in oblivion, leaving only the reputation to their author of realizing Joseph's just though severe picture of a "Sovereign who began everything and finished nothing."

On the whole, the history of princes affords few examples of such talents and such force of character on a throne so diverted from all good purposes, and perverted to the working of so much mischief. There have been few abler monarchs in any part of the world. It may well be doubted if there has been one as bad in all the important particulars in which the worth or the wickedness of rulers tells the most powerfully upon the happiness of the world.

The accidental circumstance of sex has sometimes led to instituting comparisons of Catherine with our Elizabeth; but the points of resemblance were few. Both possessed a very strong, masculine understanding; both joined to comprehensive views, the firm resolution, without which nothing great is ever achieved; both united a vehement love of power with a determination never to brook their authority being questioned; and both were prepared, though in very different degrees, to sacrifice unscrupulously those whom they regarded as obstacles in the way of its gratification. Whether Elizabeth in the place of Catherine might not have become more daring, and throwing off all the restraints imposed by the Ecclesiastical and Parliamentary Constitution of her country, have attained by open force those ends which she was obliged to compass by intrigue, is a matter of more doubtful consideration. Certainly her reign is sullied by none of those atrocious crimes which cast so dark a shade on the memory of Catherine; nor can any comparison be fairly made between the

act which approaches nearest the enormities of the Northern Tyrant, and even the least of those mighty transgressions.

The passions that most influence the sex, present remarkable points both of contrast and of resemblance in the kind of empire which they exercised over these great sovereigns. The one was the victim of sensual propensities, over which she exercised no kind of control: the other carefully avoided even every appearance of such excesses. So differently were they constituted, morally as well as physically, that it is more than doubtful if Catherine ever felt the passion of love, or Elizabeth that of sex, while the latter was in love with some favourite or other all her life, and the existence of the former was a succession of the grossest amours. But in this both pursued the same course, that the favourite of the woman in neither case ever obtained any sway over the Queen; and that the sensual appetites of the one and the tender sentiments of the other, were alike indulged, without for a moment breaking in upon the scheme of their political lives.

Their accession to the thrones of their respective kingdoms was marked by very different circumstances; the one succeeding by inheritance without a possible objection to her right, the other usurping the crown without the shadow of any title at all. Yet the sovereign whose title was indisputable had far more perils and difficulties to encounter in defending her possession, than she who claimed by mere force in contempt of all right. The religious differences which marshalled the English people in two bitterly hostile divisions, kept Elizabeth in constant anxiety during her whole reign, lest the disinclination of one class proving stronger against her than the favour of the other in her behalf, attempts upon her life or her authority might subvert a throne founded upon every ground of law, and fortified by many years of possession. Catherine had no sooner seized upon the crown of the Czars than all her difficulties vanished, and once only or twice, during her reign of between thirty and forty years, was she ever molested by any

threats of a competition for her crown. It is due to the Englishwoman, that her admirable firmness and clemency combined should be recorded in these untoward circumstances. No alarm for her own safety urged her to adopt any cruel expedients, or to consult her security by unlawful means; nor did she ever but once seek a justification of lawless conduct in the extraordinary difficulties and even dangers of her position. Catherine, who had walked to supreme power over her husband's corpse, easily defended her sceptre by the same instruments which had enabled her to grasp it. The single instance in which Elizabeth shed a rival's blood for her own safety, admitted of extenuation, if it could not be justified, by the conspiracy detected against her life; and the times she lived in, rendering assassination perilous, instead of murdering her rival in a dungeon, she at least brought her charges openly into a court of inquiry, and had her tried, judged, executed, under colour of law before the face of the world.

In one thing, and in one alone, the inferiority of the Englishwoman to the German must be admitted; and this arose from the different circumstances of the two Sovereigns, and the feebler authority with which the former was invested. Through her whole reign she was a dissembler, a pretender, a hypocrite. Whether in steering her crooked way between rival sects, or in accommodating herself to conflicting factions, or in pursuing the course she had resolved to follow amidst the various opinions of the people, she ever displayed a degree of cunning and faithlessness which it is impossible to contemplate without disgust. But if there be any one passage of her life which calls forth this sentiment more than another, it is her vile conduct respecting the execution of Mary Stuart—her hateful duplicity, her execrable treachery towards the instruments she used and sacrificed, her cowardly skulking behind those instruments to escape the censures of the world. This was the crowning act of a whole life of despicable fraud and hypocrisy; and, from the necessity of resorting to this, Catherine's more absolute power set her free: Not that

the Empress's history is unaccompanied with traits of a like kind. When her troops had sacked the suburbs of Warsaw, and consummated the partition of Poland by the butchery of thousands of her victims, she had the blasphemous effrontery to celebrate a *Te Deum* in the metropolitan cathedral, and to promulgate an address to the people, professing "to cherish for them the tender feelings of a mother towards her offspring." It vexes the faith of pious men to witness scenes like these, and not see the fires of Heaven descend to smite the guilty and impious actors.

In the whole conduct of their respective governments it would be hard to find a greater contrast than is exhibited by these two famous princesses. While Catherine sacrificed everything to outward show in her domestic administration, Elizabeth looked ever and only to the substance; the former caring nothing how her people fared or her realms were administered, so she had the appearance of splendour and filled the world with her name; the latter, intent upon the greatest service which a sovereign in her circumstances could perform, the allaying the religious dissensions that distracted all classes of her subjects, and maintaining her crown independent of all foreign dictation. Assuming the sceptre over a barbarous people scattered through a boundless desert, Catherine found the most formidable obstacles opposed by nature to what was obviously prescribed by the circumstances of her position as her first duty, the diffusing among her rude subjects the blessings of civilization; but desirous only of the fame which could be reaped from sudden operations, and impatient of the slow progress by which natural improvement must ever proceed, she overcame not those obstacles, and left her country in the state in which it would have been whoever hsd filled her place. Succeeding to the throne of a nation torn by faction, and ruled by a priesthood at once tyrannical and intolerant, Elizabeth, by wise forbearance, united to perfect steadiness of purpose, by a judicious use of her influence wheresoever her eye, incessantly watchful, perceived that her interposition could

help the right cause, above all, by teaching each sect that she would be the servant of none while disposed to be the friend of all, and would lend her support to that faith which her conscience approved without suffering its professors to oppress those of rival creeds, left her country in a state of peace at home as remarkable and as beneficial as the respect which her commanding talents and determined conduct imposed on foreign nations.

The aggrandizement of the Russian empire during Catherine's time, at once the monument of her worst crimes and the source of the influence ever since exerted by her successors over the affairs of Europe, has been felt by all the other powers as the just punishment of their folly in permitting Poland to be despoiled, and by none more than those who were the accomplices in that foul transaction. It is almost the only part of her administration that remains to signalize her reign; but as long as mankind persist in preferring for the subject of their eulogies mighty feats of power, to useful and virtuous policy, the Empress Catherine's name will be commemorated as synonymous with greatness. The services of Elizabeth to her people are of a far higher order; it is probable that they owe to her the maintenance of their national independence; and it is a large increase of the debt of gratitude thus incurred to this great princess, that ruling for half a century of troublous times, she ruled in almost uninterrupted peace, while by the vigour of her councils, and the firmness of her masculine spirit, she caused the alliance of England to be courted and her name feared by all surrounding nations.

If, finally, we apply to these two Sovereigns the surest test of genius and the best measure of success in their exalted station—the comparative merits of the men by whom they were served—the German sinks into insignificance, while the Englishwoman shines with surpassing lustre. Among the ministers who served Catherine, it would be difficult to name one of whom the lapse of forty years has left any remembrance: but as Elizabeth never had a man of inferior, hardly one of middling ca-

pacity in her service, so to this day, at the distance of between two and three centuries, when any one would refer to the greatest statesmen in the history of England, he turns instinctively to the Good Times of the Virgin Queen.

APPENDIX.

and we, without scruple, arrayed another against them. This he thought fit to deny in the most positive manner, although the ministers offered to produce documents written by himself that proved it, from among the papers at the Secretary's office. A warm debate ensued, and at length Lord Amhurst, the general who had commanded our troops in that Canadian war, was so loudly appealed to on all sides, that it compelled him to rise, and, most unwillingly, (for he greatly respected Lord Chatham,) falter out a few words; enough however to acknowledge the fact, a fact admitted generally and even assumed by the opposition lords who spoke afterwards. They seemed to lay the question quietly by as far as it concerned Lord Chatham's veracity, and only insisted upon the difference between the two wars, the one foreign the other civil; arguing also, that we might have been under some necessity of using retaliation, since the French certainly first began the practice so justly abhorred. The Annual Register for 1777 states, that Mr. Burke took the same course in the House of Commons.

"Upon hearing what had passed in the House of Lords, Lord Bute exclaimed with astonishment, 'Did Pitt really deny it? Why, I have letters of his still by me, singing *Io Pœans* over the advantages we gained through our Indian allies.' Could what he thus said have been untrue, when it was almost a soliloquy spoken rather *before* than *to* his wife and daughters, the only persons present? The letters he mentioned were probably neither official nor confidential, but such common notes as might pass between him and Lord Chatham, while still upon a footing of some intimacy.

It must be observed, that in 1777 Lord Bute had long withdrawn from all connexions, lived in great retirement, and had no intercourse whatever with the people then in power."

III.

The following very interesting letter is from the youngest and only surviving daughter of Lord North.

All comments upon its merits or its value are superfluous:—

"My dear Lord Brougham,

"You mentioned to me the other night, your intention of writing the character of my father, to be placed among some other characters of the statesmen of the last century, that you are preparing for the press, and at the same time stated the difficulty of describing a man of whom you had no personal knowledge. This conversation has induced me to cast back my mind to the days of my childhood and early youth, that I may give you such impressions of my father's private life, as those recollections will afford.

"Lord North was born in April, 1733; he was educated at Eton school, and then at Trinity College, Oxford; and he completed his academical studies with the reputation of being a very accomplished and elegant classical scholar. He then passed three years upon the Continent, residing successively in Germany, Italy, and France, and acquiring the languages of those countries, particularly of the last. He spoke French with great fluency and correctness; this acquirement, together with the observations he had made upon the men and manners of the countries he had visited, gave him what Madame de Staël called *l'Esprit Européen*, and enabled him to be as agreeable a man in Paris, Naples, and Vienna, as he was in London. Among the lighter accomplishments he acquired upon the Continent, was that of dancing; I have been told that he danced the most graceful minuet of any young man of his day; this I must own surprised me, who remember him only with a corpulent, heavy figure, the movements of which were rendered more awkward, and were impeded by his extreme nearsightedness before he became totally blind. In his youth, however, his figure was slight and slim; his face was always plain, but agreeable, owing to his habitual expression of cheerfulness and good humour; though it gave no indication of the brightness of his understanding.

"Soon after his return to England, at the age of

twenty-three, he was married to Miss Speck, of Whitelackington Park, Somersetshire, a girl of sixteen: she was plain in her person, but had excellent good sense; and was blessed with singular mildness and placidity of temper. She was also not deficient in humour, and her conversational powers were by no means contemptible; but she, like the rest of the world, delighted in her husband's conversation, and being by nature shy and indolent, was contented to be a happy listener during his life, and after his death her spirits were too much broken down for her to care what she was. Whether they had been in love with each other when they married, I don't know, but I am sure there never was a more happy union than theirs during the thirty-six years that it lasted. I never saw an unkind look, nor heard an unkind word pass between them; his affectionate attachment to her was as unabated, as her love and admiration of him.

"Lord North came into office first, as one of the Lords of the Treasury, I believe, about the year 1763, and in 1765 he was appointed as one of the Joint Paymasters.* In 1769, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and some years after, First Lord of the Treasury. He never would allow us to call him Prime Minister, saying, there was no such thing in the British Constitution. He continued in office thirteen years; during the three last he was most anxious to retire, but he suffered himself to be overcome by the earnest entreaties of George the Third that he should remain. At length the declining majorities in the House of Commons made it evident that there must be a change of ministry, and the King was obliged reluctantly to receive his resignation. This was a great relief to his mind; for, although I do not believe that my father ever entertained any doubt as to the justice of the

* An anecdote is related of his Paymastership which will paint, though in homely colours, his habitual good humour. He was somewhat disappointed at finding he had a colleague, who was to divide the emoluments of the office, which was then chiefly prized for its large perquisites. The day he took possession of the official house, a dog had dirtied the hall, and Lord North, ringing for a servant, told him to be sure, in clearing the nastiness away, that he took half of it to his colleague, as it was a perquisite of the Joint office.—Editor.

American war, yet I am sure that he wished to have made peace three years before its termination. I perfectly recollect the satisfaction expressed by my mother and my elder sisters upon this occasion, and my own astonishment at it; being at that time a girl of eleven years old, and hearing in the nursery the lamentations of the women about 'My Lord's going out of power' (viz., the power of making their husbands tidewaiters), I thought going out of power must be a sad thing, and that all the family were crazy to rejoice at it!

"It is hardly necessary to say, that Lord North was perfectly clean-handed and pure in money matters, and that he left office a poorer man than when he came into it. His father being still living at that time, his income would have scantily provided for the education and maintenance of his six children, and for the support of his habitual, though unostentatious hospitality, but the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports becoming vacant, the King conferred it upon him. His circumstances, by this means, became adequate to his wishes, as he had no expensive tastes, or love of splendour, but he was thoroughly liberal, and had great enjoyment in social intercourse, which even in those days was not to be had without expense. Lord North did not long continue out of office, the much criticised Coalition taking place the year following, 1783. The proverb says, 'Necessity acquaints us with strange bedfellows;' it is no less true, that dislike of a third party reconciles adversaries. My eldest brother was a Whig by nature, and an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Fox; he, together with Mr. Adam, and Mr. Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), were, I believe, the chief promoters of the Coalition. My mother, I remember, was averse to it, not that she troubled her head with being a Tory or a Whig, but she feared it would compromise her husband's political consistency. I do not pretend to give any opinion upon this subject, having been too young at the time to form any, and since I grew up I have always been too decided a Whig myself to be a fair judge. The ministry, in which Mr. Fox was at the head of the Foreign, Lord North of the Home Office, and the Duke of Portland of the Treasury,

lasted but a few months: in 1784 Mr. Pitt began his long administration. My father, after he was out of office, attended Parliament, and sometimes spoke and voted, independent of the opinions of his new allies; but this made no difference in the cordiality of their friendship, which remained unimpaired to the end of his life.

"I will now attempt to give you my impressions of my father's style of conversation and character in private life. His wit was of the most genuine and playful kind; he related (*narroit*) remarkably well, and liked conversing upon literary subjects; yet so completely were all these ingredients mixed and amalgamated by good taste, that you would never have described him as a sayer of *bon mots*, or teller of good stories, or as a man of literature, but as a most agreeable member of society and truly delightful companion. His manners were those of a high-bred gentleman, particularly easy and natural; indeed, good-breeding was so marked a part of his character, that it would have been affectation in him to have been otherwise than well-bred. With such good taste and good breeding, his raillery could not fail to be of the best sort—always amusing and never wounding. He was the least fastidious of men, possessing the happy art of extracting any good that there was to be extracted out of anybody. He never would let his children call people *bores;* and I remember the triumphant joy of the family, when, after a tedious visit from a very prosy and empty man, he exclaimed, 'Well, that man *is* an insufferable bore!' He used frequently to have large parties of foreigners and distinguished persons to dine with him at Bushy Park. He was himself the life and soul of those parties. To have seen him then, you would have said that he was there in his true element. Yet I think that he had really more enjoyment when he went into the country on a Saturday and Sunday, with only his own family, or one or two intimate friends; he then entered into all the jokes and fun of his children, was the companion and intimate friend of his elder sons and daughters, and the merry, entertaining playfellow of his little girl, who was five years younger than any of the others. To his servants he was a most kind and indulgent master; if provoked by stupidity or impertinence, a few

hasty, impatient words might escape him; but I never saw him *really out of humour*. He had a drunken, stupid groom, who used to provoke him; and who, from this uncommon circumstance, was called by the children 'the man that puts papa in a passion;' and I think he continued all his life putting papa in a passion, and being forgiven, for I believe he died in his service.

"In the year 1787 Lord North's sight began rapidly to fail him, and in the course of a few months he became totally blind, in consequence of a palsy on the optic nerve. His nerves had always been very excitable, and it is probable that the anxiety of mind which he suffered during the unsuccessful contest with America, still more than his necessary application to writing, brought on this calamity, which he bore with the most admirable patience and resignation; nor did it effect his general cheerfulness in society. But the privation of all power of dissipating his mind by outward objects, or of solitary occupation, could not fail to produce at times extreme depression of spirits, especially as the malady proceeded from the disordered state of his nerves. These fits of depression seldom occurred, except during sleepless nights, when my mother used to read to him, until he was amused out of them, or put to sleep.

"In the evenings, in Grosvenor-square, our house was the resort of the best company that London afforded at that time. Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan occasionally; and Lord Stormont, Lord John Townshend, Mr. Windham, Sir James Erskine, afterwards Lord Rosslyn, his uncle, then Lord Loughborough, habitually frequented our drawing-room; these, with various young men and women, his children's friends, and whist-playing ladies for my mother, completed the society. My father always liked the company of young people, especially of young women who were sensible and lively; and we used to accuse him of often rejoicing when his old political friends left his side and were succeeded by some lively young female. Lord North, when he was out of office, had no private secretary; even after he became blind, his daughters, particularly the two elder, read to him by turns, wrote his letters, led him in his walks, and were his constant companions.

"In 1792 his health began to decline; he lost his sleep and his appetite; his legs swelled, and symptoms of dropsy were apparent. At last, after a peculiar uneasy night, he questioned his friend and physician, Dr. Warren, begging him not to conceal the truth; the result was, that Dr. Warren owned that water had formed upon the chest, that he could not live many days, and that a few hours might put a period to his existence. He received this news not only with firmness and pious resignation, but it in no way altered the serenity and cheerfulness of his manners; and from that hour during the remaining ten days of his life, he had no return of depression of spirits. The first step he took, when aware of his immediate danger, was to desire that Mr. John Robinson (commonly known by the name of the *Rat-catcher*) and Lord Auckland might be sent for; they being the only two of his political friends whose desertion had hurt and offended him, he wished before his death to shake hands cordially and to forgive them. They attended the summons of course, and the reconciliation was effected. My father had always delighted in hearing his eldest daughter, Lady Glenbervie, read Shakspeare, which she did with much understanding and effect. He was desirous of still enjoying this amusement. In the existing circumstances, this task was a hard one; but strong affection, the best source of woman's strength, enabled her to go through it. She read to him great part of every day with her usual spirit, though her heart was dying within her. No doubt she was supported by the Almighty in the pious work of solacing the last hours of her almost idolised parent. He also desired to have the French newspapers read to him. At that time they were filled with alarming symptoms of the horrors that shortly after ensued. Upon hearing them, he said, 'I am going, and thankful I am that I shall not witness the anarchy and bloodshed which will soon overwhelm that unhappy country.' He expired on the 5th of August, 1792.

"Lord North was a truly pious Christian; and (although from his political view of the subject) I believe that one of the last speeches he made in Parliament was

against the repeal of the Test Act, yet his religion was quite free from bigotry or intolerance, and consisted more in the beautiful spirit of Christian benevolence than in outward and formal observances. His character in private life was, I believe, as faultless as that of any human being can be; and those actions of his public life which appear to have been the most questionable, proceeded, I am entirely convinced, from what one must own was a weakness, though not an unamiable one, and which followed him through his life, the want of power to resist the influence of those he loved.

"I remain, my dear lord, gratefully and sincerely yours,

"CHARLOTTE LINDSAY.

"*Green-street, February the* 8*th*, 1839."

IV.

Elizabeth's conduct to Mary, Queen of Scots.

THE whole subject of Mary's conduct has been involved in controversy, chiefly by the partisans of the House of Stuart after the Revolution,* and somewhat also by the circumstances of the Catholic party in both England and Scotland taking her part as an enemy of the Reformed religion. Elizabeth's conduct towards her has also in a considerable degree been made the subject of political disputation. But it may safely be affirmed that there are certain facts, which cannot be doubted, which indeed even the most violent partisans of both those princesses have all along admitted, and which tend to throw a great, though certainly a very unequal degree of blame upon both.—Let us first of all state those unquestioned facts.

1. It is certain that Darnley, Mary's second husband, was foully murdered, and equally certain that Mary was

* This Appendix has been added in deference to the suggestion of a friend, whose sound judgment and correct taste are entitled to command all respect, and who considered that an unjust view would be given of Elizabeth's conduct if no addition were made to the sketch in the text.

generally suspected, and was openly charged, as an accomplice of the murder, if not the contriver of the crime.

2. Yet it is equally certain that instead of taking those active steps to bring the perpetrators to punishment, required both by conjugal duty and by a just desire to wipe off the stain affixed to her character, she allowed a mere mock trial to take place which outraged every principle of justice, while she refused Lennox the father's offers of evidence to convict the murderers.

3. Bothwell had only of late been admitted to her intimate society; he was a man of coarse manners and profligate character, universally accused and now known to have been the principal in the murder. No one pretended at the time seriously to doubt his guilt; yet immediately after the event she married him, and married him with a mixture of fraud, a pretence of being forced to it, so coarse that it could deceive nobody, and so gross as only to be exceeded by the still grosser passion which actuated her whole conduct.

4. That he was married when the intimacy began, is not denied. Nor is it doubted that she consented to marry him before his former marriage had been dissolved.

5. The divorce which dissolved it was hurried through the Courts in four days, by the grossest fraud and collusion between the parties. Hence Mary was as much guilty of bigamy in marrying him as was the Duchess of Kingston two centuries later; for the Duchess produced also a sentence of separation *à mensâ et thoro* in her defence, obtained with incomparable greater formality—but obtained through collusion, and therefore considered as a nullity—and she was accordingly convicted of the felony.

6. These acts of Mary were of so abominable a nature that all rational men were turned away from supporting her, and her deposition was almost a matter of course in any Christian or indeed any civilized country.

But as regards Elizabeth:

1. When Mary took refuge in England, all her previous misconduct gave Elizabeth no kind of title to detain her as a prisoner, nor any right even to deliver her up a prisoner at the request of the Scots, had they demanded her.

2. In keeping her a prisoner for twenty years under various pretexts, Elizabeth gave her ample license and complete justification for whatever designs she might form to regain her liberty.

3. The conspiracy of Norfolk looked only to the maintaining of her strict rights, the restoration of her personal liberty, and her marriage with that ill-fated nobleman, which she was willing to solemnize as soon as she could be divorced from Bothwell, who having lived for some years as a pirate, afterwards died mad in a Danish prison.

4. Babington's conspiracy included rebellion and also the assassination of Elizabeth; and great and certainly very fruitless pains are taken by Mary's partisans to rebut the proof of her having joined in it. She, indeed, never pretended to resist the proof that she was a party to the conspiracy in general; she only denied her knowledge of the projected assassination. But supposing her to have been also cognizant of that, it seems not too relaxed a view of duty to hold that one sovereign princess detained unjustifiably in captivity by another for twenty years, has a right to use even extreme measures of revenge. In self-defence all means are justifiable, and Mary had no other means than war to the knife against her oppressor.

5. For this accession to Babington's conspiracy, chiefly, she was brought to trial by that oppressor who had violated every principle of justice and every form of law, in holding her a prisoner for twenty years.

6. Being convicted on this trial, the sentence was executed by Elizabeth's express authority; although, with a complication of falsehood utterly disgusting, and which holds her character up to the scorn of mankind in all ages, she pretended that it had been done without her leave and against her will, and basely ruined the unfortunate man, who, yielding to her commands, had conveyed to be executed the orders she had signed with her own hand.

The pretence upon which the proceeding of the trial may the most plausibly be defended, is that a foreign prince while in this country, like all foreigners within

its bounds, is subject to the municipal law, and may be punished for its violation. This, however, is a groundless position in law, even if the foreign prince were voluntarily here resident; for not even his representative, his ambassador, is subject to our laws, either civil or criminal, as a statute declaratory of the former law has distinctly laid down,* although at an earlier period Cromwell hanged one for murder. But if it be said that this part of international law had not been well settled in the sixteenth century, at all events it was well known then that no power can have the right to seize on the person of a foreign prince and detain him prisoner; and that, consequently, if so detained, that foreign prince owes no allegiance to the laws of the realm.

But although Elizabeth's conduct towards Mary Stuart is wholly unjustifiable, and fixes a deep stain upon her memory (blackened still more by the gross falsehood and hypocrisy with which it was thickly covered over), it may nevertheless be said that she merits the commendation of having acted against her kinswoman with open hostility, and sacrificed her by the forms at least of a trial, instead of procuring her life to be privately taken away. A little reflection will remove any such argument used in mitigation of her crime. That she preferred murder by due course of law to murder by poison, was the merit of the age rather than of the person. Two centuries, perhaps one, earlier, she would have used the secret services of the gaoler in preference to the public prostitution of the judge. But she knew that Mary's death, if it happened in prison, even in the course of nature, would always be charged upon her as its author; and she was unwilling to load her name with the shame, even if she cared not how her conscience might be burdened with the guilt. She was well aware, too, of the formidable party which Mary had in the country, and dreaded not only to exasperate the Catholic body, but to furnish them with the weapons against herself, which so great an outrage on the feelings of mankind would have placed in their hands.

* The Stat. 7 Anne, c. 12.

Besides, she well knew that the trial was a matter of easy execution and of certain result. She was delivered over, not to a judge and jury acting under the authority of the law in its ordinary course of administration, but to forty peers and privy councillors, selected by Elizabeth herself, whose very numbers, by dividing the responsibility, made their submission to the power that appointed them a matter of perfect ease, and the conviction of Mary an absolute certainty. In every view, then, which can be taken of the case, little credit can accrue to Elizabeth for preferring a mode of destroying her rival quite as easy, quite as sure, and far more safe, than any other: Not to mention that it must be a strange kind of honour which can stoop to seek the wretched credit of having declined to commit a midnight murder, rather than destroy the victim by an open trial.

If, then, it be asked upon what grounds Elizabeth's memory has escaped the execration so justly due to it, the answer is found not merely in the splendour of her other actions, and the great success of her long reign under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty, but rather in the previous bad conduct of Mary—the utter scorn in which all mankind held her except those whom personal attachment or religious frenzy blinded—the certain effect of time in opening the eyes of even those zealots, when her truly despicable conduct came to be considered—and chiefly in the belief that she, who was supposed to have joined in the assassination of her own husband, and was admitted to have married his brutal murderer while his hands were still reeking with blood, had also been a party to a plot for assassinating the English queen. These considerations have not unnaturally operated on men's minds against the victim of Elizabeth's crooked and cruel policy: and it is an unavoidable consequence of sympathy for the oppressed being weakened, that the hatred of the oppressor is diminished in proportion.

The foregoing statements have proceeded upon the plan of assuming no facts as true respecting the conduct either of Mary or Elizabeth excepting those which are on all hands admitted, and which have indeed never

been denied, either at the time or in the heats engendered by subsequent controversy. The result is against both those famous Queens; loading the memory of the one with a degree of infamy which no woman of ordinary feeling could endure, subjecting the other to the gravest charges of perfidy and injustice. But it would be giving a very imperfect view of Mary's conduct were we to stop at these admitted facts.

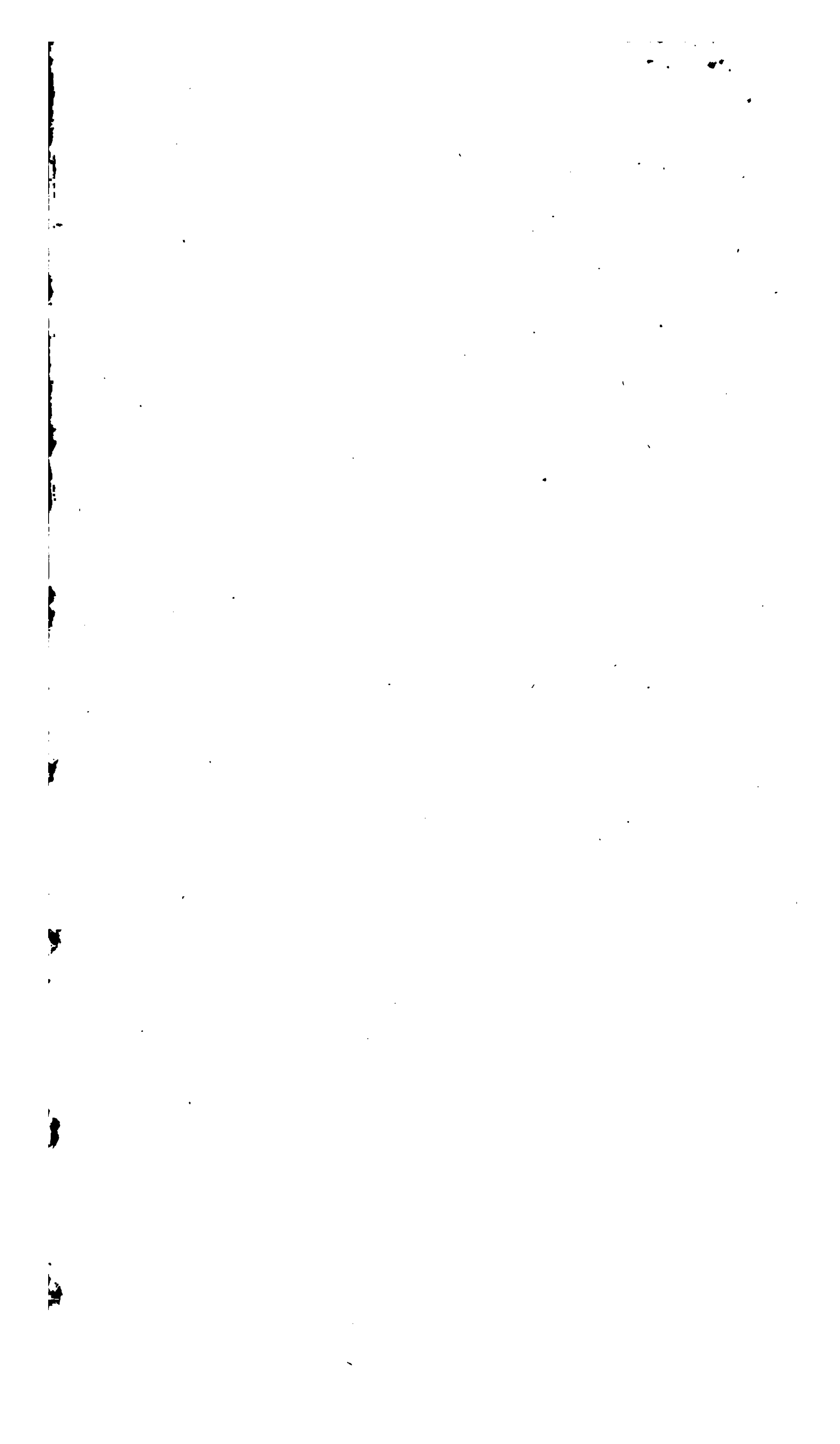
The proofs against her in respect of Darnley's murder, although not sufficient to convict her in a court of justice, are quite decisive of her guilt, when the question is propounded as one of historical evidence. Indeed it may be safely affirmed, that no disputed point of historical fact rests upon stronger evidence. The arguments to prove the letters genuine are not easily resisted. Mr. Hume's admirable summary of those arguments is nearly conclusive. The other concurring circumstances, as the statements of Bothwell's servants at their execution, are also very strong. But above everything, her own conduct both in obstructing all search after the murderers, and in immediately marrying their ringleader, seems to place her guilt beyond a doubt. Even this, however, is not all. She submitted the case to solemn investigation, when she found that the effects of her infamy were fatal to her party, clouding over all her prospects of success, or even of deliverance; and as soon as the worst part of the charges against her were brought forward, and the most decisive evidences of her guilt adduced, the letters under her own hand, she did not meet the charge or even attempt to prove the writings forgeries, but sought shelter behind general protestations, and endeavoured to change inquiry into a negotiation, although distinctly warned that such a conduct of her case was flying from the trial to which she had submitted, and must prove quite demonstrative of her guilt.

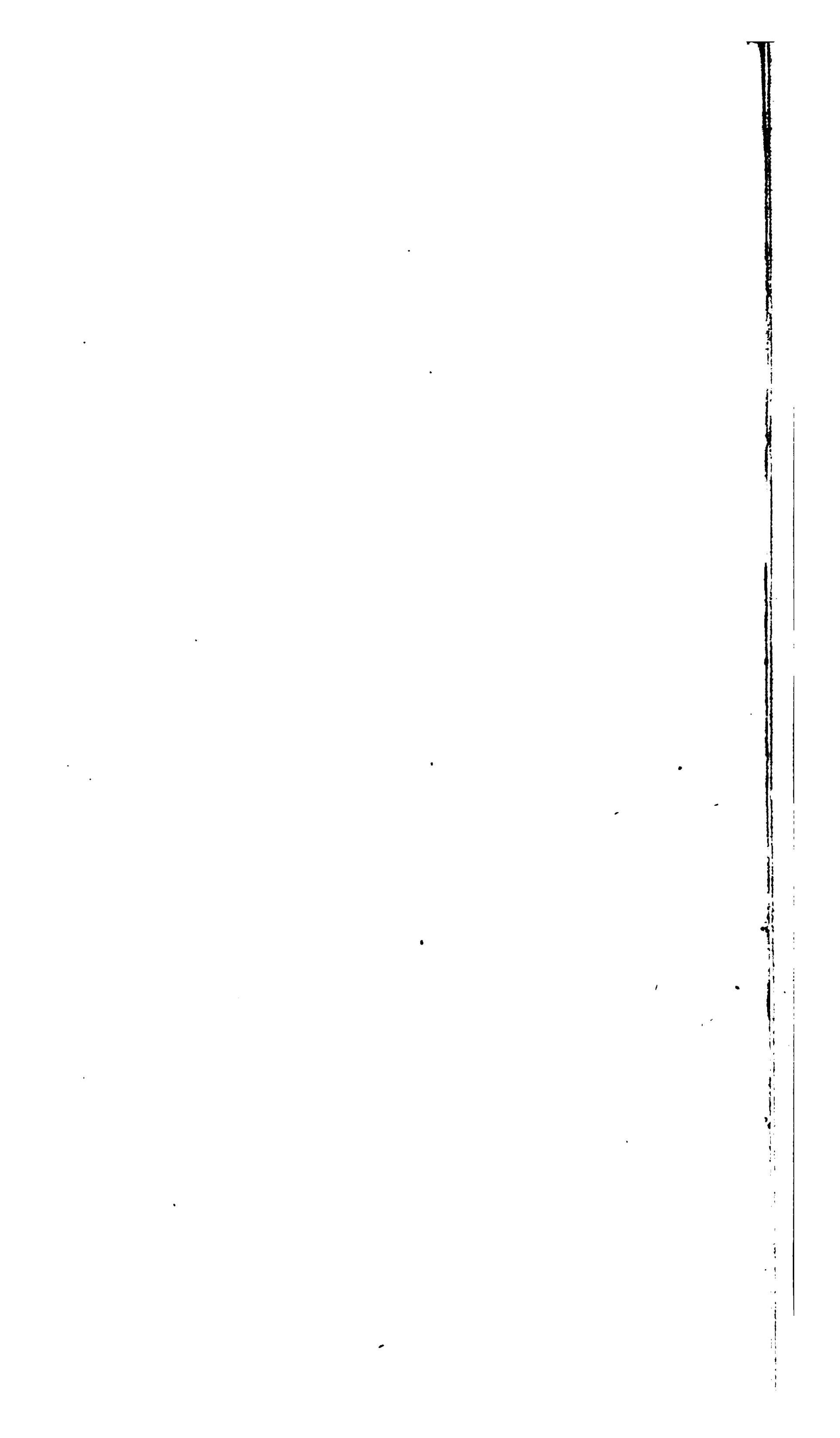
On the whole, it is not going too far to close these remarks with Mr. Hume's observation, that there are three descriptions of men who must be considered beyond the reach of argument, and must be left to their prejudices —an English Whig, who asserts the reality of the Popish

plot; an Irish Catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641; and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of Queen Mary.

It is, however, fit that a remark be added touching the error into which the justly celebrated historian has fallen, and which shows that he knew very little of what legal evidence is, how expertly soever he might deal with historical evidence. After enumerating the proofs adduced at the trial of Mary's accession to the assassination part of Babington's plot, namely, copies taken in Walsingham's office of correspondence with Babington; the confessions of her two secretaries, without torture, but in her absence, and without confronting or cross-examination; Babington's confession, and the confession of Ballard and Savage, that Babington had shown them Mary's letters in cipher,—the historian adds, that, "in the case of an ordinary criminal, this proof would be esteemed legal and even satisfactory, if not opposed by some other circumstances which shake the credit of the witnesses." Nothing can betray greater ignorance of the very first principles of the law of evidence. The witnesses he speaks of do not even exist; there is nothing like a witness mentioned in his enumeration of proofs; and how any man of Mr. Hume's acuteness could fancy that what one person confesses behind a prisoner's back that he heard a third person say to that prisoner, or rather that this third person showed him ciphered letters not produced of that prisoner, could be anything like evidence to affect him, is truly astonishing, and shows how dangerous a thing it is for the artist most expert in his own line, to pronounce an opinion on matters beyond it.

END OF THE FIRST SERIES.





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